

my body, me, and all the people in between

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/35318554) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/35318554>.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandoms:	Minecraft (Video Game) , Video Blogging RPF
Relationships:	Wilbur Soot/Sally , Wilbur Soot & Technoblade & TommyInnit & Phil Watson , Wilbur Soot & Phil Watson , Wilbur Soot & Technoblade , Wilbur Soot & TommyInnit , Floris Fundy & Wilbur Soot , Jschlatt & Wilbur Soot
Characters:	Wilbur Soot , Sally (Fish) , Phil Watson (Video Blogging RPF) , Technoblade (Video Blogging RPF) , TommyInnit (Video Blogging RPF) , Floris Fundy , Jschlatt (Video Blogging RPF) , Wilbur Soot & Wilbur Soot's Parents , Wilbur Soot & Wilbur Soot' Aunt/Uncle
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe , Alternate Universe - Foster Family , Alternate Universe - Modern Setting , Alternate Universe - College/University , Intersex Wilbur Soot , Trans Wilbur Soot , Wilbur Soot Has an Anxiety Disorder , Wilbur Soot Has Mental Health Issues , Wilbur Soot has hypochondria , Wilbur Soot and Technoblade and TommyInnit are Siblings , Protective Wilbur Soot , Older Sibling Wilbur Soot , Wilbur Soot is Not Okay , Wilbur Soot-centric , Wilbur Soot is Floris Fundy's Parent , Wilbur Soot Needs a Hug , There are so many wilbur tags omg , Found Family , Angst , Hurt/Comfort , Recovery , It Gets Worse Before It Gets Better , Autistic Technoblade , autistic ranboo , Technoblade has ADHD , tommyinnit has adhd , Autistic Fundy , Autistic Sally , watch me make evey charcater autistic /hj , Unplanned Pregnancy , Trans Pregnancy
Language:	English
Series:	Part 5 of encompass
Stats:	Published: 2021-11-25 Completed: 2021-12-25 Words: 26,112 Chapters: 5/5

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by [lightning_anon](#)

Summary

Wilbur has never found it hard to describe himself. He's smart, funny, charming, anxious, prone to breakdowns, more than a little mentally ill, a brother, a son, scared, trying his best, proud of himself, intersex, trans, probably panicking.

Wilbur Soot's a lot of things. Sometimes he's not exactly sure how to put it into words.

But one thing is for sure, Wilbur Soot is in love.

-

Wilbur's encompass installment: a story of how we connect to others, ourselves, and our bodies.

with me

Chapter Notes

CW: medical discussion of intersex identities, unplanned pregnancy, alcohol, underage drinking, drug use, panicking, hypochondria, abandonment, breaking up, vague discussion of sex, vague discussion of trans bodies, queerphobia, meltdown

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Wilbur is 20 years old when he finds out he's pregnant.

It happens to be the same day he learns he can even get pregnant.

But it takes twenty years to get there.

Wilbur isn't born with a zodiac sign. Or maybe more accurately, he's born right in the middle of two zodiac signs, debatably making him both.

And frankly, that's only where the ironies start.

He falls in love with Sally at a college party. It's cliché and over a game of beer pong, but it doesn't make it any less true.

She wins the game of beer pong, that only makes him love her more.

It's Schlatt's party, because it's always Schlatt's party.

Wilbur likes Schlatt's party. For an alcoholic, Schlatt plays it pretty safe. He has narcan for anyone to grab at any point and the numbers for a billion different people, hotlines, and centers for those who need it.

He also cuts people off, makes people have the buddy system when they're on hard shit, and doesn't drink.

He's a pretty interesting guy, someone Wil's proud to say he's friends with.

Schlatt's reminds him of Phil sometimes. Other times he reminds him of Techno.

Schlatt's like Phil in the caring sense and the obvious tie to alcoholism. Phil's never directly said it but... well Wilbur knows. It's not exactly a secret.

Schlatt's also Techno in the sense that he's a little bit batshit crazy, scary as hell, and intimidating at first when really he's a complete softy.

Point is- Schlatt's a really good host.

An even better host for setting up a game of beer pong with the cute girl across from him.

Wilbur smiles at her, downs the last of the shitty beer from the game, and goes with her as they both move to the couch.

She could keep playing, winners right and all, but Wilbur's pretty sure this attraction isn't one sided.

Wilbur's not exactly stellar at this entire relationship thing. In fact, he's quite piss poor at it. But they flirt, dance, go home together, and fuck.

Wilbur's never been a part of a one stand.

Turns out, he never will be.

Because Sally and him fuck but the next morning, they both want her to stick around. They get brunch together, near campus because the pancake place gives them a student discount.

It's nice, and normal, and not weird at all and for once Wilbur doesn't feel like a freak dating someone.

It's kind of one of the downsides of being intersex. Y'know besides the medical upkeep and complications, the scientific inaccuracies, the systemic oppression, and mental illness that comes with it.

Dating has always been a hang up for him.

Because- okay in queer circles, in queer circles it's a bit better, because they know about trans people. Dating a trans person isn't a strange novelty as much as it used to be. Especially in queer circles.

But fuck, Wilbur's not exactly just trans, is he?

If being gay is being a unicorn in the world of straight people, then Wilbur's a fucking pegasus unicorn hybrid that's able to shape shift and breathe fire out their mouth and their ass.

He's kind of a pathetic form of a creature, a one trick pony who's one trick is getting turned down.

Because here's the issue. He's not a trans guy. He's trans sure, trans masc, you got it. But he's not ftm, he's not a trans male. He's intersex, born as intersex, labelled as female, learns he's intersex, identifies as intersex, identifies as transmasc, and is intersex.

And really he thinks he's probably only transmasc because society decided he had to pick. If he wasn't assigned a sex at birth, or assigned the right sex- intersex, maybe he would have never identify as transmasc. Maybe he'd just be intersex.

But that isn't what happened.

So yeah, Wilbur's gender is weird and not many people want to deal with it.

So when things start getting frisky with Sally, Wilbur pulls on the reins.

"Wait," he gasps, and Sally respects his words immediately. She pulls back, checks in.

The words tumble out before Wilbur can even think much of them.

"I'm intersex," he says, "transmasc. Yeah."

"Cool," Sally breathes, "I'm trans too, mtf. Kinda suspected, you're Schlatt's friend."

Wilbur makes a noise that's something of a question.

Sally laughs, "Schlatt wouldn't set me up with an asshole. Usually means they aren't always completely cis."

Fuck. Okay. Good. They're doing this?

"So we're good?" Wil says.

Sally nods.

"We're good."

"Okay then," Wilbur breathes, and they both go back to enthusiastically consenting.

That's how things start. It's a much more interesting beginning than how things end.

Their first real date is laser tag. Technically, it's a friend outing, but Sally holds his hand in the dark and kisses him senseless in all the right ways and Wilbur is so, so very gone.

By the third date, they're dating. Sally's his girlfriend, him her boyfriend. All their friends tease them relentlessly and well... that's fair.

Wil doesn't even care, he's so excited.

Sally is exhilarating, and exciting, and fun in all the right ways. Wilbur feels alive in a way he never has before with her and he wonders if this is what people mean when they talk about soulmates.

He doesn't tell his family right away- not that they wouldn't approve- more that this is all so special and new and Wilbur's in love and he doesn't want to jinx it. He wants this to be his thing a little while longer.

It goes on for a month and it stays and it's real.

On that first month anniversary they're at another party- one of Schlatt's of course, wilbur doesn't go to any others- when he gets a call from Techno.

He's a little buzzed but still more than aware of his surroundings. He doesn't get drunk that often, and again, only at Schlatt's.

He picks up the call, his brother's face popping into view. Wilbur smiles at the sight- God why is he such a sap for his family- and calls out a hello.

Techno immediately yanks his headphones off.

It's then that Wilbur realizes a few things. One, Techno's stimming like crazy, rocking back and forth and doing tongue clicks and toe wiggles. Two, he has his weighted blanket over his shoulders. Three, his eyes are damp.

Four, four, now Techno's screaming, shit and the music is blaring and oh God that's why Techno ripped off his headphones what was Wil thinking.

Wilbur quickly mutes, promises Sally he'll be right back, and races to find Schlatt.

"Schlatt," he gasps after his short sprint to find the host, "I need somewhere quiet."

Schlatt looks at him.

"Uh... there's not going to be anywhere quiet for like... the entire block."

Wilbur's face falls. Techno's still on the call, rocking and so clearly distressed. He's biting at his wrist now and Wilbur aches to help redirect the harmful stim but he has no way of helping Techno right now.

Schlatt must see something in his face, because he pulls out his phone.

He presses a few buttons, and the music stops.

Wilbur blinks, seconds later and people are asking about the music.

"Take my bedroom," Schlatt says, "I'll keep everyone quiet, or kick em out."

"Thanks," Wilbur says, promising he'll do a better job of actually thanking Schlatt later.

He quickly races his way away to Schlatt's room, tucking himself in and getting himself situated. He sends a message to Techno that he's going to unmute and that it's quiet before actually doing so.

"Hey Tech," Wilbur whispers quietly. Heaving a sigh of relief when he turns up his phone volume to acknowledge the fact that Techno is now whimpering but no longer screaming and has his headphones back on. "Having a rough time, huh?"

Techno nods, and rocks back and forth more, eyes never meeting his camera.

Well that's fine.

Wil can deal with that.

He doesn't know what Techno needs, but often when he calls like this he just needs Wil, a voice, his brother, so Wil starts sharing about his week, in that same soft voice he had before.

Eventually Techno stops crying. Wilbur hopes that's a good thing.

He continues to update Techno about his life, telling a story of up how he had picked Sally up at her class for lunch one day when she had a rough morning.

Techno doesn't seem to be paying attention to any of it, though he usually is. And if he isn't... well that's okay too. Wilbur's here to help Techno focus on something else. Techno doesn't need to listen. Techno can listen to his life another time, when they're both in a state to talk about it.

"Thanks," Techno horsley mutters at one point.

"Course," Wilbur says, because what else would he say? Techno's his brother, he'd do anything for him.

There's a moment of silence between the two of them, and then the door to the bedroom creaks open.

Sally sticks her head through.

Wilbur and her make eye contact.

'All good?' she mouths.

Wilbur hesitates, and then nods.

"Thanks," he says verbally.

"Who's with you?" Techno asks.

Wilbur hesitates once more. No one knows about Sally yet. Or at least their relationship. Wilbur's kept her in this intimate small bubble of just theirs.

But now, well it's been a while. Wilbur wants to share his love for her with the world.

"I'm with Sally," Wilbur says, "my girlfriend."

The last word in his sentence is said with pride and confidence, everything Wilbur usually isn't.

Techno blinks back at him. It's then Wilbur realizes maybe dropping this on Techno during a time he's already struggling was maybe not the best idea.

Sometimes he forgets how absolutely awful Techno is with change.

But that doesn't seem to be the issue at all.

Suddenly, techyno smiles, a small little smirk that looks absolutely stupid on him.

"Oh?" he says, "a girlfriend, huh?"

"Yeah," Wilbur agrees, looking away from his phone to meet Sally's eyes, "my girlfriend."

Sally smiles back at him, and then blows a kiss. She leaves them alone after that.

She's also the one who brings it up later.

"I hope your brother's doing better," she mentions the next day.

"Oh yeah, he is," Wilbur says, "he was having a rough go of things and then the music from the party over the call made it a lot worse and he had a meltdown."

Sally looks at him, eyebrows scrunched up. Wilbur then realizes not everyone knows autistic terminology like he does.

"Oh, uh, a meltdown is an autistic thing, when autistic people get really overwhelmed and stuff." Wilbur explains.

He says it aloof, natural, normal, because Techno being autistic is his normal. Even so, he tenses in preparation for Sally's response.

"You're brother's autistic?"

"Yeah," Wilbur says uncertainly. He has no idea if Sally's tone is positive and negative.

And really, come on, he's the allistic one, Techno's the one that's supposed to be shit at tone.

"No way," she says, "fuck, I had been trying to figure it out."

Wilbur's not sure what she's saying, but it doesn't sound positive. He begins to bristle up, ready to defend Techno with his dying breath.

"I didn't know how to tell you," Sally continues, "because people can be so weird about it. I'm autistic too."

Wilbur blinks.

"No way? That's so cool!"

Sally smiles at him.

"I'm not autistic but Techno is and I'm neurodivergent and all my family is and this makes things so much better because it's not awkward and oh thank God," Wilbur rushes out.

And jeez with this amount of rambling he's beginning to sound like Tommy. Kid's starting to rub off on him. Maybe he should visit home less.

Who is he kidding, he loves the little gremlin.

Maybe he should visit more.

Sally smiles more, and bounces on her toes.

And why hadn't Wilbur seen that before? The little toe bounces she always does that are so obviously a stim?

"Can I kiss you?" Sally says abruptly. And there's another thing, abrupt topic switches, lack of transitioning from topic to another.

How did Wil not know?

"Please," he says, and their lips meet.

The two of them are fireworks, twin stars pulling each other into their orbits.

The thing is, those stars are bound to crash, to go out in a fiery explosion.

His dad finds out because Phil always knows when somethings going on with him. And now that he knows, well that opens up an entirely new world for all of them.

Sally meets Phil. She's nervous, not coming from a great family herself, and Wilbur understands it, respects it, agrees to take it slow.

They go out to dinner, because neither of them are ready for Sally to meet the entire family.

Plus, with the addition of Ranboo Wilbur doesn't want to shake things up at home. When they're both a bit more ready, then they can discuss that.

So they go out to dinner, him, Sally, and Phil and it goes...

It goes spectacularly.

Yes, it's awkward at first. Phil and Sally are strangers, Wilbur the only link and both of them are trying so hard to like one another that it's almost painful to watch.

But then Phil asks Sally about what she's studying and Wilbur's genius, stunning, wonderful girlfriend starts infodumping about climate justice and gentrification.

Phil is enraptured, he's always been that way, giving full attention to his kids when they infodump. Wilbur's delighted to see that hold up to Sally.

Later, afterward, Phil and him talk.

"I approve," Phil says, "you don't need my approval, but I know you want it. You're an adult and you can make your own choices and you're wise and you know what you're doing. But you're also still my kid and if I know anything about you I know you were freaking out about this dinner for over a week and- I love her. Sally's wonderful. I approve, of course I approve."

And fuck of that doesn't just make Wilbur choke up. Phil nails it exactly.

Not knowing what else to say, Wilbur slams into Phil, pulling him close and sobs into his shoulder just like he's done so many times growing up.

Phil pulls him close and Wilbur feels so loved.

"I was so scared you wouldn't like her," Wilbur admits.

Because yeah, maybe he did what to keep Sally to himself for a bit. But it was more than that, wasn't it?

More than a bit if it was his anxiety, telling him that things wouldn't work out, that Phil would hate her that Sally would hate his family that something horrible would go wrong and-

"Wilbur," Phil says, "breathe."

Wilbur does.

"I love her," Phil promises, "I'm so happy for you."

Everything in his life is going smoothly. He's enjoying school, he has a steady relationship, and his mental health is stable.

Maybe not good but he's never really expecting it to be good. Stable is enough for him. He can work with that.

So why doesn't he feel good?

It starts with small, stupid things.

He's a little more tired, a little bit nauseous. What's weird is when his boobs start to hurt.

Or... hurt is the wrong word but they're a bit sore and that scares him because oh gosh what if he has breast cancer?

Such is the way of hypochondria. He feels just a little bit sick but that means so much more could be wrong and he could ignore the nausea and fatigue because that could be stress or something but now...

It's probably more than that, isn't it.

But his breasts being tender is new and strange and there are so many cases where breast cancer goes unnoticed or misdiagnosed and-

Well and the tiredness that can be a symptom too, right and wait he should probably Google his symptoms and well at first he just thought being nauseous and tired was due to stress but maybe...

Maybe he has gallbladder disease or, or there's a chance he could have developed diabetes, sure he's never shown any other signs before but it's possible and wait what if the nausea isn't actually nausea and his side is actually hurting which could mean his appendix and-

Holy shit he probably has appendicitis and if his appendix bursts he could die.

Oh God, oh God Wilbur's dying, he's dying isn't he?

And he's worried. He panics to Sally about it, explaining that she needs to call an ambulance immediately before he has a heart attack in her kitchen.

Sally speaks to him slowly, smoothly, makes him take a few deep breaths and calm down. From there, they reevaluate what's going on and his actual symptoms.

Oh. He's probably not dying, is he?

They discuss if he does need to go in for a visit (because he doesn't need a hospital immediately) or if he's being paranoid, falling victim to his anxiety.

"I mean, that is a little concerning," Sally says, "but it could be a lot of things, even just sleeping wrong. Or if you're close to your period. And you don't have a consistent cycle so that's definitely possible."

Right, his breasts are tender too. He's not having a heart attack. Or appendicitis. Or a stroke.

Which is true. All of that is true.

"But if it's worrying you this much, you could also just stop by the health clinic," Sally suggests, "they do free walk-ins."

The next day, he's in the health center. It's surprisingly empty and Wilbur gets seen almost immediately. He talks quickly to the doctor and they do a few bits of an examination before discussing if anything is wrong.

And of fucking course this has to be more complex because he's fucking intersex.

Questions about his body, about periods and reproduction and hormones and so many of the questions Wilbur has to answer with a 'well this is how an average body would act, but mine's weird.'

They tell him he's fine, that it's one of three things. His period is coming up, he's pregnant, or his hormones are being weird.

Wow, very helpful.

A week later he doesn't get his period.

The two options remain.

He isn't pregnant, he can't get pregnant, so that means hormone issues which means he has to go to his actual doctor and okay sure she's awesome but also this sucks because come on why won't his body and hormones and shit just work.

"Mood," Sally says, watching him stab himself in the thigh with his T as she takes her estrogen pill. "Mood."

Dr. Summers is Wilbur's favorite doctor on earth. He'd say person, but that goes to Phil. She used to be his second favorite person but then Techno and Tommy and now Ranboo and Sally and gosh why does Wilbur have so many people he loves that also love him?

They run tests, because so much of Wilbur's condition is running tests and making sure his hormones and fucking him up.

Spoiler alert: they usually are. Which is why he takes a fuck ton of pills. And his T shot.

Hormone changes and level differences are a part of being alive, of being human, but when Wilbur's underproducing and-slash-or overproducing like crazy it starts to become a lot more serious, a genuine health issue.

He was younger Wilbur's fucked up hormones almost put him in a coma. He didn't even know they could do that.

The tests come back.

He's pregnant.

Wilbur flat out laughs, and that's when he realizes Dr. Summers is serious.

"What?" he says, "I thought I couldn't get pregnant."

"The majority of people with your condition can't," his doctor confirms, "but it's definitely not unheard of."

"Holy shit I'm pregnant."

"Yes," she agrees, "but there's a lot to discuss. I need to warn you that just because you are pregnant does not mean that this pregnancy is viable."

Wilbur blinks.

"Oh."

He hadn't thought of that. Hadn't thought of anything besides the words 'you're pregnant'. He had yet to think about whether it was viable or not, whether he even wanted it or not.

All he can think about is that he's pregnant. Here and now. For better or worse, whatever the situation may be.

Dr. Summers talks to him a bit longer, and then lets him go.

Good. He has to tell Sally.

Sally.

God, what does he tell Sally?

It's one thing to say he's pregnant. It's another to say he's pregnant but it's probably not viable.

Wilbur gets back to campus in record time and before even going to his apartment, he heads straight to Sally's to tell her the news.

He knocks, even though he has a key, because he gets anxious about those things, about entering without approval. Especially growing up in a family when permission to enter a room was always respected.

"Wil!" Sally lights up the instant she opens the door. "Hi!"

"Hey," Wilbur says, "hey uh, so I have some news."

"Okay, yeah, what's up?" Sally said, leading him further into her apartment for them to settle on her couch.

Wilbur taps his foot on the floor, tries to even his breathing and works on not having a panic attack kn Sally's couch.

"I'm pregnant," Wilbur bluets out before he can even think about how he wants to do this.

Sally goes still for a solid minute.

"What?" she eventually asks, voice just above a whisper.

"Yeah," Wilbur says, "I'm pregnant. And that's all I really know-"

"Get out."

Wilbur freezes.

"What?" he says. He looks up at Sally, surprised to see her rigid and tense. Her knuckles are white from where she grips her hands tightly and her entire body is trembling slightly.

"I think," Sally says, suddenly a lot more unsure, "I think you need to leave now."

"Sally?" Wilbur says.

"Please," she begs.

And... and well Wilbur doesn't know what else to do.

He leaves.

On his way back to his own apartment, he pulls out his phone, sending a quick text off to Sally, asking her to let him know when she's ready to talk.

The text doesn't go through.

It says his number's blocked.

Wilbur blinks at the screen.

Sally blocked his number.

Oh.

This isn't- this isn't just a short term thing is it?

Wilbur's doing this himself.

And just like that, Wilbur bursts into tears.

He doesn't know what else to do, so he goes home. Not apartment home, not Sally home, but home home.

Where his family is.

This time he has no qualms about using his keys to open the door.

It's late, but not too late.

Late enough that everyone's probably in their rooms. Good. He doesn't really want a crowd right now.

What he does want, what he does want is his dad.

He sends him a text, hopefully Phil will see it and come downstairs. He doesn't want to head upstairs and risk Tommy seeing him. As much as he loves his little brother, right now Wilbur just needs his dad.

"Hi kiddo," Phil says a moment later, stepping into the kitchen. "Rough night, huh?"

With a choked sob, Wilbur races into his arms.

Phil opens wide and pulls him close.

"I got you," he soothes, "I got you. We're going to get through this. Whatever this is, we'll get through it together."

Wilbur cries harder.

It's hard for him to calm down. He gets so choked up in his sobs that he's pretty sure even Phil gets generally concerned with how hard he's hyperventilating.

But he gets there eventually.

Phil doesn't ask what's wrong.

Instead, he sits Wilbur down on the couch, and makes them both some hot chocolate. Phil prefers tea, but Wilbur's always preferred hot chocolate and the fact that his dad chose Wil's favorite warm drink over his own is just that little something extra.

It even has mini marshmallows, because they're obviously superior to the big ones, no matter what the rest of Wilbur's family says.

Phil doesn't ask what's wrong, doesn't push. Wilbur tells him anyway.

"I think Sally left me," Wilbur admits.

Phil's face drops. Wilbur can tell he's just as shocked as he is. He's quick to cover it up though. Wilbur appreciates that. He doesn't need to go through that pain again.

"And- and I already feel like I lost something today. I didn't- I didn't think I'd lose her too.

"Oh kiddo," Phil says, "I'm so, so sorry. What do you need from me?"

Wilbur sniffles.

"Someone to listen," he says, "and then- and then maybe problem solve?"

Phil nods.

"Courser bud, I can do that."

"Okay so uh, I went to the doctors today. Uh, Dr. Summers."

Phil's eyes wide a bit, and he pulls back a little.

Wilbur knows he's wondering why Wilbur went to his specialist, especially without talking to Phil about it.

But Phil doesn't ask, because all Wilbur said was that he wanted Phil to listen.

"And it turns out I'm pregnant. It's Sally's, of course it's Sally's."

Phil's eyes get wider. Wilbur's pretty sure he can see his dad biting his tongue and his hands are gripped a bit tighter around Wilbur's own.

But he still doesn't interrupt.

"And uh, honestly I don't even know what to think about that, feel about that," Wilbur admits, "and I guess I don't think- I don't feel like I really have a choice of how I want to feel because it's very likely that yes while I am pregnant it isn't going to be a viable pregnancy and so I don't even- I mean I don't even get to figure out if this is something I want or not because I mean it's- I'm not even going to get the choice to keep it."

"And- and that's a lot and I don't- I didn't- I don't know how to feel about it and so I went to tell Sally because I wanted her to know and she's like- she always knows what to do and I trust her and I thought okay I don't know what to think right now but hey maybe she can at least- well I wanted her. I wanted the comfort. Not that- not that I needed comfort of the pregnancy not being viable but more of needing the comfort of not getting the choice of if this is something I want or not and- and..."

"And then she asked me to leave," Wilbur says.

Phil exhales roughly, it's the first sound he's made during wilburs entire mini speech.

Wilbur shifts, "so I left. And I tried texting her, just to y'know, let me know when she was ready to talk. But uhm, well... she's blocked my number, so..."

Wilbur shrugs again

"And that's kinda it," he says, "that's what happened."

Wilbur barely gets to the end before Phil pulls him on to another hug.

Almost instantly, he finds himself crying again. Phil's holds him close all the while, rubbing a hand soothingly over his back and not making any complaint or comment about the billions of tears and snot that's has to be getting in his shirt.

They stay like that for more than half an hour

"You are going to be okay," Phil promises, "it's all going to be okay."

Wilbur nods.

"And it's also okay to grieve in the process, grieve what you've lost," Phil encourages.

"Things will be okay. But they aren't right now, and that's okay too. You're allowed to hurt."

They stay like that for a good while longer and don't get to much brainstorming or problem solving of the whole situation

But that's okay, Wilbur thinks he really just needed his dad for a little bit.

They do some brainstorming later. Phil points out that Sally may need some space. This is a big change and that's a lot for anyone. In addition, it can be harder for autistic people to process change and sometimes they need more space to do that.

It doesn't make it okay that Sally was more than a bit of an asshole to Wilbur, but it's the beginning of a potential explanation. It's nice to have that.

Phil also points out that the pregnancy is very new, to take it one day at a time, together, versus jumping to conclusions. It still could be viable, and from there Wilbur has many options.

In the end, Sally doesn't stick around. The baby does.

Things are weird that way.

Chapter End Notes

so it begins. and what a wild ride it will be.

im am so happy to be back and i hope yall enjoy this one greatly. im still catching up on techno comments, but will get there.

~Cool Community Things to Check Out!~

Encompass Sandbox Project: The official guide to the Encompass Sandbox Project- a project in which users are encouraged to take inspiration from the encompass series and create their own varying works of fiction from writing, to art, and so much more.

encompass: the sandbox: encompass: the sandbox is the official collection for the Encompass Sandbox Project.

encompass: behind the scenes: an insider look at everything that goes on in the encompass series. This series will feature Q&A, projects, plans, and other behind the scenes content.

for you

Chapter Summary

Wilbur hates being pregnant. But he's doing this thing anyways. Might as well get a baby out of this whole disaster.

Chapter Notes

CW; discussion of death/abortion/child birth/labor and more, feelings of hopelessness, greek myth about abandoning a child, gender inequality, discussion of intersex bodies, gender/body dysphoria, medicaion, feelings of abandonment

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Pregnancy sucks. So much.

He's only known for a week now and it's awful. It's awful and he's dealing with it all alone, with no one to comfort him.

He has his roommates, and they're close and all, good friends. But they're not just his friends, also Sally's and Wilbur doesn't know how to deal with all of that, so he just kind of avoids it. Avoids them.

He plays a lot of avoiding. Avoiding people, avoiding thoughts, and now avoiding food because he keeps throwing it up.

If this baby's going to die, can't it just hurry the fuck up?

Sometimes, sometimes he hates his body so fucking much. This is definitely one of those times.

"How are we doing today?" Dr. Summers asks, when he goes in for his first check up.

"Is the baby dead yet?" Wilbur asks, "how much longer?"

Dr. Summers blinks at him.

"What?"

"When's the baby going to die?" Wilbur says, "if it's going to be a long time, can't I just get an abortion or something."

Dr. Summers continues to blink, and she puts down the clipboard she's holding. She takes a seat and gestures to Wilbur to do the same opposite from her.

"Okay, let's talk," she says.

Wilbur nods.

"Wilbur, you're pregnant."

"I know that."

"Let me finish. Wilbur you are pregnant. And this pregnancy is very risky for the fetus. Your body may not be able to support or provide a fertile home for said fetus. That is not a fault of yours."

"I kn-"

"That said, this very much could be a viable pregnancy. The odds of miscarriage will dramatically decrease if you get through the first trimester."

Wait, the first trimester-

"Of course, if you don't want to have a baby, if you don't want to be pregnant, if you don't want to go through birth, or the potential emotional pain of miscarriage, or other medical complications, if you don't want the things that come with this, you can absolutely abort this pregnancy. That's one of the things we're here to talk about today if that's a conversation you want to have."

Wilbur blinks.

"I have a choice?" he asks.

He- he could choose not to have this child? Without it just dying on him down the line?

"I'm here to provide you with as many choices as I possibly can," Dr. Summers says, "if that means not going through with this pregnancy, I'm here for that. If that means trying to come out of this on the other side with a full term baby, well work to that."

"Oh."

He has a choice.

"It's a lot to think about," Dr. Summers says, "and if you do chose to go through with this pregnancy we'll have a lot of things to discuss. Pregnancy affects hormones and bodies in many, many ways, and we don't know how exactly it could affect you. Not only could this pregnancy not be viable for the fetus, but it could also not be viable to you," Dr. Summers explains.

Oh.

"I hadn't thought of that," Wilbur admits.

She gives him a small nod.

Huh. Well he sure has a lot to think about. Better see if he can move up his therapy appointment.

Oh shit.

"Would I have to go off my meds?" He asks.

"Which ones?" Dr. Summers asks.

"The prozac," he says, "but uh, anyof them."

She nods.

"You'll definitely have to stop taking testosterone. The fluoxetine- I'm actually going to encourage you to stay on that. The rest have no recorded risks to the fetus but because you take them to balance your own hormones which will be dramatically changing through pregnancy, they will need to be closely monitored and most probably changed and adjusted."

"I thought you couldn't take antidepressants when you were pregnant," Wilbur frowns.

"Some," Dr. Summers admits, "but current studies show that fluoxetine has no proof of increasing birth defects. And- well- I really don't think it would be good to go off them even if there were concerns."

That's fair. Wilbur's mental health is kind of a shit show.

"Okay," he says, "okay, so what will this mean? Like- what's this going to look like?"

"Good questions," Dr.summers says.

And they talk about it. They talk about it a lot and Wilbur reflects and he decides- he decides if he can, he'll have this baby.

His baby.

But he still probably can't.

He doesn't get his hopes up.

And then he makes it through the first trimester and his odds increase by so much and he finally gets to tell everyone.

Sally still doesn't come back.

He's learning to be okay with that.

Techno's taking the pregnancy the weirdest.

Phil's emotional, Tommy's surprised, Ranboo's awkward.

But Techno, Techno's just... distant.

Wilbur reminds himself that his brother might need some time, that it might take him a little. This is a big change, it took Wilbur time himself.

It still hurts a little.

But two weeks later Techno comes back having read every pregnancy book he could get his hands on and recites every fact he can to Wilbur.

Wilbur knows he's going to make an amazing uncle.

Pregnancy isn't easy, he's not going to lie. In fact, it's kind of a disaster.

The morning sickness is the worst and it even sticks around into the second trimester for him.

He doesn't mind the weight gain that much, nor the round belly. But he does hate how his breasts grow and his cheeks soften.

A large part of pregnancy feels like reversing his transition and he knows that his gender identity is valid no matter how he looks but-

But well, feminine isn't how he wants to look. And god does he look so feminine pregnant.

He gets misgendered once, and then again, and god those instances stopped happening years ago but now they're regular.

Wilbur gets it, people aren't used to seeing men pregnant and even less used to see intersex people pregnant.

It doesn't make it any easier.

What does help, is the connection he begins to form with his unborn child.

"I heard Tommy wants it named after him," Techno says, "I think just to spite him you should name it after me."

"I am not naming my child Technoblade," Wilbur says.

Techno humphs.

"I don't know if I want to pick a name yet," Wilbur admits, "it still seems too early."

Technoblade shifts, "that's okay, that's valid," he agrees. He passes for a moment. "How are you doing?" he asks, "You and your relationship with the baby."

Wilbur shrugs.

"It's been hard," he admits, "Pregnancy is a lot. I'm glad I haven't had too many complications but I'm really sick of throwing up and this stupid thing keeps getting me misgendered," Wilbur complains, tapping a hand lightly against his prominent baby bump.

Techno nods.

"Being intersex and trans definitely seems like it could be hard at times," Techno acknowledges, "especially while also pregnant."

Wilbur gives a small huff.

"You think?"

Techno frowns, "Yeah that's why I literally just said-"

"Rhetorical question Tech."

Techno nods.

"And how's things with the baby? You know I've been reading about how important forming a bond with your baby while still pregnant is. It's obviously not necessary but can be a huge support in creating healthy bonds early on," Techno infodumps.

Wilbur shrugs.

"I feel like it's kinda hard to know a thing that doesn't exist."

Techno frowns.

"But it does exist?"

Wilbur shrugs.

"I guess," he agrees, "but sometimes it doesn't feel very real."

"What do you mean?"

Wilbur shrugs and looks down.

Techno studies him for a moment, just watching, and then pulls out his phone, turning his face to intensely study whatever he's pulling up instead.

"Look at this," technobkade says.

Wilbur looks over, it's a grainy picture of an ultrasound, a little fetus all curled up right in the center. It's Wilbur's ultrasound, the latest one he sent to the family groupchat.

"That the beginning of your kid," Techno encourages, "this right here- " he gestures at the photo, "is literally right there" he gestures at Wilbur's abdomen.

Wilbur blinks, and then looks back at the prominent bump over his stomach. He looks at how it stretches the skin, warps his frame. He's noticed the amazing zig zag of lightning bolt stretch marks that have begun to form.

He knows he's pregnant.

But that's the first moment he realizes he's carrying a child.

Instantly he bursts out in tears.

Technoblade jerks away.

"You're crying," he states, hovering a respectable distance away, "that's not good."

Wilbur cries more.

He's got this entire living thing growing in his body. He's making a home for it and in a few months time he's going to have a whole entire real baby that he made himself that is his.

Isn't that crazy?

"You're still crying," Techno states.

Wilbur nods, and makes grabby hands.

Techno tilts his head, but accepts the grabbing and tilts forward, letting Wilbur hug him.

He's stiff at first, obviously uncomfortable but more than willing to go along with whatever this is to please Wilbur.

But Wilbur knows Techno so he squeezes in the right places, adding just enough pressure for Techno to melt in his arms at the sensation.

That whole talk has Wilbur adjusting a lot of how he looks at this whole pregnancy thing.

He begins talking to the baby- his baby more. It goes to an it to a loving, breathing, being. It becomes its own independent thing and not part of Wilbur, it's own entity that Wilbur is supporting.

In turn, come the nicknames.

He chooses not to know the gender, less because he doesn't want to know and more that he's still scared of getting attached.

So genderless nicknames, it is.

He calls the baby a 'little fun guy' when he's doing flips around his stomach one day and Tommy scrunches his face at him.

"Did you just call him a fungi?"

"What, n-"

"I mean I guess that kind of makes sense because fungi do need host plants and isn't a baby just the same thing? Right? I mean it needs a host to grow and all."

"Tommy," Wilbur sighs because God his little brother is just too dang cute but also kind of an idiot. "Tommy I said fun guy, not fungi."

Tommy blinks.

"Oh."

And Wilbur bursts out laughing.

But fungi sticks around and before long that's what the entire household is calling the little one.

Wilbur starts- he starts to be happy, more content and as the months pass this becomes more and more real.

When he made the decision to try for this pregnancy he knew he wanted to keep the kid. It's his kid and he couldn't- he can't give that up

He respects the people that do, that go through all of this just to give another family a child. But Wilbur wants his child with him in his life.

Wilbur wants to be a dad.

And he's started planning, budgeting, discussing plans. Phil agrees that Wilbur can move back in and it's something they both want versus either of them feeling obligation.

It's nice, every things going well, Wilbur's prepared for this.

But month seven comes and gone and all this does is keep getting more and more real.

Month seven comes and he's realizing he's having a baby, that his chances of having this baby are as good as they're going to get.

Even if his body decided to fuck up now, or the baby had some sort of immediate issues, the baby's healthy enough that it could come out.

It's not desirable, obviously, they want to keep the thing cooking.

But if something horrible goes wrong, they have options. Wilbur's going to have a baby.

And with month seven also comes bed rest and leaving school and all the changes that really mean 'oh shit, I'm having a baby.'

It means baby clothes and baby things and every day seems to go by so fast yet so slow, this giant countdown to something he's still coming to terms with.

It also means moving back in with Phil and Tommy. He enjoyed his time by himself, living without his family, but he's more than ready to admit he's happy to be back. He belongs with his family.

Wilbur had been a little worried that Tommy would have trouble adjusting to his presence again. Wilbur knows Tommy has missed both Techno and him once they moved out, but Wilbur also knows Tommy's more than a little protective of attention.

Tommy didn't get enough healthy attention as a child, and it shows in how he soaks Phil's attention up and gets defensive and territorial when anyone else gets a bit too close.

Wilbur worries that moving back in with a new baby on the way will be getting a little bit too close.

His second week back and first week on bedrest, Tommy sneaks into his room near midnight. Wilbur's not quite asleep, but he's close.

Even so, he's awake enough to be aware of Tommy standing in his doorway. Tommy shuffles at the entrance, and Wilbur watches him with mostly closed eyes. After a moment, he turns to leave.

"You can come in, you know," Wilbur calls. Tommy stills.

"I thought you were asleep," Tommy admits.

"Hmm," Wilbur says, because responding with a 'no' doesn't make much sense considering he is now very obviously awake.

Tommy slips into his room, hovering near Wilbur's bed. He shuffles on his feet again. Wilbur thinks he could use a hug.

"Come here," Wilbur says, gesturing to the bed and tapping the covers next to him.

Tommy barely hesitates before diving under the covers. Now that he has permission, he has no hesitation to snuggle right up to Wilbur's side.

Wilbur wonders if his own kid will do the same one day.

"Hey kid," Wilbur says, "Rough night?"

Tommy nods, Wilbur feels the motion of Tommy's neck move against him.

Suddenly, Wilbur feels the urge to apologize.

"I'm sorry," he says, "I know moving home, moving back, having this kid- it's a lot. And you didn't sign up for it. It's not fair to you to expect you to just be okay with this and you've been so good and so strong. Gosh Tommy, I just- I'm sorry."

For a second, only the faint sound of crickets fills the room.

“I dreamed about my mom,” Tommy admits.

Oh. Wilbur hasn’t heard anything about Tommy’s mom before.

“She gave me up when I was four. I don’t even remember her,” Tommy admits, “And I don’t care about her. Really, I don’t.”

Usually, Wilbur would call Tommy out for being a liar. But this- this is the truth. Wilbur can tell.

“I had a dream she left me. But, but that she left me now. That I grew up with her and never met you guys and then she left me. And then I was all alone with no one. She was the only person I had, and then she left.”

Wilbur holds Tommy a little tighter.

“And it made me sad,” Tommy admits, “But also- also happy.”

He pauses. Wilbur doesn’t fill the silence with reassurance, instead he listens.

“I was happy because I woke up and I knew that would never happen,” Tommy admits, “because my mom already left me. And I know you and this family now would never leave me like she did in my dream.”

Oh.

And fuck Wilbur’s crying again. Hormones suck.

“Yeah,” Tommy finishes lamely, “Yeah. So I love you I guess.”

“Love you too, brat,” Wilbur chokes out around the tears streaming down his face.

They go silent after that, cuddling together in Wilbur’s too small bed, all tangled together.

Just before Wilbur nods off, Tommy speaks up one more time.

“I’m glad you’re home,” he whispers, and then Wilbur’s asleep.

After that, things change. Wilbur’s stuck on bed rest for another six weeks and hating every second of it. He’s uncomfortable and bored and terrified out of his mind.

He doesn’t think he’s ready.

He doesn’t think he’ll ever be ready.

But part of him knows that he is.

God is bed rest boring though. Which is why, on month nine, he’s getting into shenanigans.

“What the fuck are you doing?” Techno announces as he exits the hall leading to his room, and into the kitchen.

And God damn it Wil's been caught.

Wilbur sighs, takes a deep breath and feels his ridiculously disproportionately weighted body move with it.

"I'm getting a glass of water," he says slowly.

"You're supposed to be on bed rest," Techno points out.

Wil takes another deep breath, narrowly avoiding snapping at Techno. Bed rest be damned.

"I was thirsty."

"You could have texted me."

Wilbur sighs in exasperation, shaking his head and reaching for the top shelf that holds his mugs.

They have way too many mugs in the house, and as such Wilbur's are on the top most shelf because he's the only one who can actually reach that high. Even so it's a stretch, he almost had to go on his tip toes.

And God damnit, why is his favorite one so far back?

"Wilbur," Techno chides, "you are literally going into surgery tomorrow."

And so close just a little farther and...

"Your doctor said that-

And Wilbur has his mug! With a satisfied hum, he falls fully back onto his feet, fully prepared to get his water and keep avoiding Techno so he can avoid the bed rest for as long as he can.

"-you needed to stay on bed rest to make-"

Wilbur takes a step toward the sink and feels a small leak.

And of fucking course he's trying to get a glass of water and now he's just starting to piss himself. Great. What next? He'll have the baby on the fucking kitchen floor?

Pregnancy sucks. Wilbur's done.

But the small trickle continues, more than the embarrassing weak bladder issues that come with being stupidly pregnant. And he has zero control over it. And that's when he gets scared.

"Techno," he says.

Techno's still rambling, something about Wilbur's heart rate and blood pressure and the baby's health?

"Techno," Wilbur chimes in once more.

He starts to question himself, because maybe it was just urine. He's stupidly pregnant and it wouldn't be the grossest thing his body has done. But, but no dice, Wil knows it's not pee.

"Techno!" Wil says, louder more forcefully

Techno finally pauses in his rant.

"My water just broke," Wilbur says.

Techno blinks.

"Wilbur Soot Watson, you are a fucking idiot."

Wilhr laughs, because if he doesn't, he'll cry.

"Are you in active labor?" Techno asks.

"I didn't think so. Everything seems fine. Just feels like I pissed my pants."

"Are you sure? Only 8-10% of people's water breaks before labor," Tchno reminds.

"It's either that or piss. If you want to smell my crotch, be my guest."

"Fuck. Jesus fucking Christ will this is why you were in bed rest. You absolute moron."

Wilbur's really wishing he listened to that advice right now. Because Wil- Wil cannot give birth. Hell, the c section's been planned since the day they determined that this actually had an okay chance of being a viable pregnancy.

Dr. Summers had told him in no uncertain terms that Wilbur and the baby would die, that it would be physically impossible for him to do this anyway but a c section.

And now he is with his water broke.

At least there's no contractions.

"Are you okay enough to call the hospital?" Techno asks, "while I call Dad? Unless you want to call Dad and I can take you to the hospital."

Fuck. Phil. Wilbur needs to figure this shit out.

Phil- Wilbur and Techno had just convinced him to get out of the house Tommy had taken him, they went to get fast food because if Phil didn't stop hovering Wilbur literally would have strangled him where he sat at his bedside table.

"Uh, you call dad," Wil says, pale at the realization that his dad is going to have his head, "I'll make all the hospital calls."

Turns out, Phil is pissed. Absolutely fucking pissed. But he can't really be that mad right now, because Wilbur is terrified and they have to get him to the hospital now for an emergency c section before he starts going into active labor because he really can't be doing that and this whole thing is a mess.

And well, really they aren't on as tight of a schedule even with this new development because this while baby birthing stuff does take a long time, but the fact that Wilbur has even carried a child to full term is sort of a miracle and they don't want to take any risks.

Phil takes him to the hospital, Tommy and Techno are there to make sure the few final things are done and they have the go bag for the birth and then to meet them at the hospital right before Wil goes into surgery. Ranboo's heading over now, and he'll be here as soon as he can.

The timing works out perfectly. Maybe breaking his water isn't such a bad thing overall.

Phil doesn't like when Wil makes that joke, staring at him sternly.

Wil laughs, and hopes his father doesn't murder him when all this is done.

And really the pairs work out great. Wilbur decided beforehand that he wants Techno in the room with him during surgery. He loves his dad but Wilbur's relationship with his body is weird and... well it just felt right.

With Techno by his side, the c section begins. Techno decided to give commentary, announcing that they're pulling his organs out now as if the sheet blocking Wilbur's view was there as an inconvenience and not an intentional design.

"Oh my god," Wilbur groans, "don't tell me that."

"I can tell you the story of Atalanta?" Techno offers instead.

"Sure," Wilbur says.

And so that's how it goes, Techno reciting the myth of a girl abandoned by her family because her father wanted a son.

Wilbur thinks Techno needs to get better c section bedside manners.

It's not the most traditional story to give birth to. But there's nothing really traditional about this birth anyways.

The C-section is quick, easy, and soon enough Wilbur has baby fungi in his arms in a hospital bed, waiting for his family to join him.

Techno went to fetch them moments ago, and they're bound to show up in seconds.

Phil's the first one in.

"I can't believe you broke bed rest," he hisses the moment he enters the room, Techno and Tommy moments behind him, and Ranboo trailing in not far after.

"You keep giving me a hard time and I won't let you hold your grandson," Wilbur says.

Phil stares at him for a moment, then stares at the lump in Wilbur's arms.

"Is that—" he whispers, as if it could be anything else. What does Phil think Wilbur's holding, a stack of potatoes?

And then, just like that, Phil bursts into tears.

Wilbur and Techno look at each other, alarmed, and Techno awkwardly gives their dad two pats on the back. If anything, Phil starts crying harder.

Tommy takes the moment to come right up to Wil, invading his personal space and leaning over into the baby's face.

"Tommy!" Wilbur chastises, "you're gunna freak her out!"

"It's a girl!" Tommy cried, "finally a woman in this godforsaken family! And ohmygosh what is that on her? She's gross!"

Wilbur rolls his eyes and let's Tommy crow over and gently insult Wilbur's newborn, celebrating in his own way.

All that's left is Ranboo, a foot away from Wilbur's bed.

"Want to meet her?" Wil asks him.

Ranboo doesn't nod, but he does shuffle forward, peering at the tiny lump of strangely folded skin. Whoever said newborns are cute is a fucking liar.

"Here, you want to hold her?" Wil offers and Ranboo's eyes go wide.

"It's fine, I promise," Wil encourages, and Ranboo shuffles even closer.

Wilbur was told about the golden hour after birth, where the baby is supposed to bond with her parents for an hour before anything else. But Will- well Wil's the only parent, but this family, this family is all going to be here for this child so Wilbur thinks that it's probably okay for them to be allowed in his golden hour.

Wilbur gives him a smile, tells him how to place his arms, and then slowly passes his daughter over. She doesn't even stir.

Ranboo's way too tall compared to her, hulking size enveloping her. But he holds her so tenderly and so full of love.

"What's her name?" Ranboo whispers, eyes staring at the tiny being in his arms.

"Nora," Wilbur tells him, "Nora Atalanta."

Nora is all her own, a name made for her in particular. Wilbur had picked it out over a month ago. A name he had prepared if he had a girl.

Her middle name was going to be Samantha. A middle name that's passed down to every first born girl in Wilbur's family. It used to be his own middle name. It was also his mom's.

It's one of the few things Wilbur has left of that part of his life. But he looks into Nora's eyes, and it feels wrong. Samantha means lost.

Wilbur's mother died, and Wilbur shed the name when it no longer fit his identity. Samantha is important to him, but it no longer belongs.

But that myth- the myth of a child being perceived as wrong, the story of a child unloved- that well...

And Techno had assured him that Atalanta had been okay, that she became a master huntress, independent and free.

Wilbur wants his daughter to be that, to be that strong individual. But Wilbur will also never abandon his daughter.

This Atalanta will be loved and cared for, but will be just as strong, just as brave.

Techno meets his eyes, and smiles.

And just like that, the moment is over. Nora has a full name.

Ranboo nods and continues staring at the baby.

Wilbur stares too, also unable to take his eyes off the tiny being he gave life to. It's so hard to think about, to comprehend, that the child is his and he helped make it.

Out of the corner of his eye, he sees Phil finally take a step forwards, and slowly the rest of his family gathers more closely

"Where's fungi- uh Nora!" Phil cries, as he stares at the absences of a child on Wilbur's chest.

Wilbur snorts, and nods over at Ranboo, who's rocking her slowly.

Phil gasps at the sight.

"Dad, everyone, meet Nora Atalanta Soot Watson."

At the name, his dad bursts out in a fresh set of tears. And even Wilbur himself can't help but start crying with him.

Chapter End Notes

how abt that new minecraft update? literally me vibrating playing cave and cliffs yall
lucky u even got a n update

and oh yeah wilbur has a baby now, how about that?

~Cool Community Things to Check Out!~

Encompass Sandbox Project: The official guide to the Encompass Sandbox Project- a project in which users are encouraged to take inspiration from the encompass series and create their own varying works of fiction from writing, to art, and so much more.

encompass: the sandbox: encompass: the sandbox is the official collection for the Encompass Sandbox Project.

encompass: behind the scenes: an insider look at everything that goes on in the encompass series. This series will feature Q&A, projects, plans, and other behind the scenes content.

every generation

Chapter Summary

Wilbur has a baby. But he has an entire life before then.

Chapter Notes

CW: parent death, parental figure death, car accident, drunk driving mentioned, self harm, suicidal thoughts and tendencies, running away, smoking mention, topics of grief and loss, intense loneliness, psychiatric care facilities, failure of medical fields/care, hypochondria, medical conditions not properly treated, gaslighting, ignoring a patients concerns,

Please note that the self harm in this chapter is described fairly in depth. Please know your limits and be careful.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Wilbur is a quiet child.

He watches more than he does and he's content to stare out windows and watch his parents do things for him.

He doesn't explore, instead learning by observation, taking in all the details around him.

Maybe that's a good thing, considering he doesn't get that long with his parents. Maybe somehow, somehow, he knew they would die young, way too early, and he set his course to remember them in as much detail as he could.

He can't remember them these days, but at least he can say that he tried.

His parents aren't perfect, but they are good.

As a kid he has a hard time making friends in school and cries a lot and gets upset when his nose gets stuffy or when the kid next to him has a cough

All normal little kid things and so his parents treat them as such. They encourage him to get out of his comfort zone and talk to new classmates, to challenge himself, to blow his nose, tell the kid next to him to cough into his elbow, and then move on.

He doesn't.

It takes them slightly too long to realize this. But once they, once they do realize they're on top of it.

When Wilbur's five years old he gets his first anxiety diagnosis. He has his first panic attack right before the first psychiatrist visit.

His tiny child lungs can't keep up with his breath and he wheezes and huffs as his parents scramble for what to do.

That's his introduction to his psychiatrist, him helping guide Wilbur down from his first panic attack. At least Wilbur got to see how good he was in action, right?

Small upsides, yes?

Maybe?

It turns out Wilbur has anxiety, with a focus on social anxiety and hypochondria.

And oh, that's what the noise blowing and fear of coughs is.

Wilbur has his second panic attack when his mom comes down with a fever. Her voice is hoarse and throat sore and by the time Wilbur's done panicking he's honestly in worse shape than she is.

But Wilbur was scared! She could have died! A fever can mean lots of scary bad diseases and infections and Wilbur heard from a classmate who heard from his brother that sometimes if an infection got really bad you had to chop body parts off so the infection doesn't spread.

Wilbur doesn't want his mom to lose her body parts!

His parents try to reassure him that his mom will be fine, that sometimes a fever just means a fever and that's all there is to it.

Wilbur struggles to breathe and doesn't know what to do. His parents are similarly out of their depth.

Wilbur isn't an easy kid. But his parents didn't sign up for an easy kid, they signed up for a kid.

So they adjust, they adapt, and they do their best to bed the parents Wilbur needs.

They learn to guide him through panic attacks and that giving him an ice cube to hold helps ground him. They don't make fun of him when he gets worried about being sick and instead talks through his concerns.

They're good parents.

Wilbur wishes he remembers more of them.

They die in a car accident, killed by a drunk driver. Just like that, they're gone.

From there, Wilbur goes to live with his aunt and uncle.

It's a hard adjust, made easier by the fact that Wilbur is still so young and that he knows his aunt and uncle well. But losing your parents is never an easy process.

He's young, and he adjusts quickly. He continues with therapy and it helps, it helps that he already has a therapist going into his parents death, and it helps greater that his current therapist is qualified to deal with grief.

It works out.

Wilbur, Wilbur quickly finds himself at home.

It's not the home he expected, or even wanted, but it's a home he's content with and even begins to thrive in.

And then comes puberty.

Wilbur's struggles with anxiety for all his life but suddenly he's twelve and everything is getting so much worse.

He's sad all the time and cries a lot and feels so afraid.

He panics over late assignments and falls apart in the bathroom and begins taking the razor blade he got to shave his legs to his thighs instead.

He's hurting and he's scared and whenever he gets a cold he thinks he's dying and his periods are so painful and he's pretty sure that he probably has ovarian cancer, that has to be why it hurts so much. Or maybe endometriosis, which is chronic with way too little research and not enough doctors looking into it.

"This isn't normal," his aunt whispers one day, sitting on a chair at his bedside, stroking back Wilbur's hair as he pretends to sleep.

Sometimes it's easier to pretend to be asleep than face the day.

"I know," his uncle sighs.

"The pain she's in, that's not right. And I'm worried- she's stopped talking to us as much and is falling behind in school and-"

His aunt trails off, still gently smoothing back his hair. Wilbur does his best not to breathe wrong.

"I'm worried," she repeats.

"I know," his uncle says, "I am too."

The first doctor ignores their worries, saying the period pain is just part of puberty and that Wilbur will grow out of it.

But things just get worse, not better.

It starts with lethargy. Wilbur's always been tired, so so tired. But usually he's tired in that emotional way, that mental way that becomes so exhausting that it starts to seep into his physical sensations.

But Wilbur's sleeping eleven hours a night and repeatedly falling asleep in school.

"We need to talk," his aunt says, "we got another call today about you falling asleep in class."

Wilbur hangs his head.

"Sorry," he says.

"Sweetheart, we're not mad," his uncle pitches in, "we're just trying to understand here."

Wilbur shuffles his foot against the ground, staring downwards. He shrugs.

"I dunno," he admits, "I just- I'm really tired."

"Okay," his aunt says, "okay."

What more can she say after all? It's apparent to all three of them that wilburs telling the truth.

His aunt talks to his therapist. Wilbur knows about it, so it's not a secret, but it still worries him. It's not his aunt talking to his therapist that worries him.

But, but he's worried about his aunt. About all the stress he has to be putting her through.

"I'm just so worried about her," she admits, "I don't know if she'd tell us if something we're wrong."

Wilbur looks at the fading lines on his thighs and wonders when things got this bad.

He waits until his aunt is off the phone to stumble down the hall and hand over his broken razor.

"I'm sorry," he whispers.

His aunt stares at it, stares at what he has handed over to her before it clicks.

"Oh god," she says, "oh, oh god."

All of a sudden she's sobbing and hugging him close.

Wilbur starts his first outpatient program after that. But the outpatient just makes him more tired and he keeps falling asleep in class and the doctors say he's fine, maybe could just use some more sleep but he's sleeping sixteen hours a day and-

His outpatient program kicks him out.

"What?" he asks, "you're kicking me out?"

"Lila, you're not participating in the program and you're not attending your school classes. Doing so are both requirements to be a part of this program."

"But I'm trying," Wilbur promises, "I really really am, I swear! I'm just so tired! And I don't mean- I don't mean to fall asleep in classes and in groups. I care, I really do, I don't know why this is happening!"

The clinician looks at her, cold and uncaring.

"I hope you work harder in your next program. You're not going to make progress if you don't put the effort in."

He leaves, and Wilbur falls to the ground sobbing. He doesn't know what to do.

Wilbur is thirteen.

He gets put into a partial hospitalization program. He hadn't tried to take his own life and he's not actively suicidal so he can't be in inpatient. He's not bad enough for residential, but not secure enough for outpatient. So partial hospitalization it is.

It's all day, so he doesn't have to attend school. It's not much different consider he doesn't spend much time actually paying attention to his classes anyways. He's too tired, and he misses a week or more each month around his period because it hurts so bad.

He stops eating. Not because he wants to or his eating is disordered but because nothing tastes good. He's never had much sense of taste anyways, but it's suddenly much worse.

The one exception is that he loves anything salty.

He sweats like crazy and he gets more depressed and everyone keeps saying it's symptoms of his depression, of his anxiety, his hypochondria or his past trauma that he must have from his parents tragic death coming full force.

Wilbur knows better.

But he's also a kid who doesn't know anything.

The signs were all there. Every single one was looked over.

And then one day Wilbur wakes up and he can barely move. He can barely talk, barely speak, and he doesn't know why this is happening to him.

He's rushed to the hospital, and immediately undergoes tests when the case for his immobility isn't immediately apparent.

He's intersex.

Wilbur's intersex.

It takes him almost falling into a coma for anyone to realize something's actually not right.

"What does that mean?" Wilbur mumbles, because he can finally somewhat talk now and keep his eyes open for more than fifteen minutes.

The doctors begin to explain, pointing out charts and explaining how Wilbur actually does have testes and how his body has both been under producing some hormones and overproducing others and that's why he's been feeling so ill lately.

They say lately like it's been a few weeks and not the past two years.

At least he finally has an answer.

He gets on meds, on hormone replacements and blockers and a bunch of things he doesn't really get except for the fact that suddenly, suddenly he's not tired all the time.

He gets happier too.

It doesn't cure his depression, nor his anxiety but his mood stabilizes to something that's finally manageable and for the first time in years Wilbur feels like he can breathe.

He can breathe.

Things aren't perfect, but they're manageable. He balances the rest of his mental health, picks up his school grades, and discusses with his new non-hospital therapist what this intersex diagnosis means for him.

And learning his intersex doesn't just help him physically, it doesn't just help with explaining the shit show that his body has been through.

It also helps him realize that- well being a girl didn't quite ever fit.

He chooses a new name and new pronouns.

Wilbur has a nice ring to it, doesn't it?

Wilbur, for once in his life, is content.

And then his aunt and uncle die.

And once again everything changes.

One thing Wilbur does remember about his parents is that they told Wilbur that if they died, he would be okay. That his aunt and uncle would be there for him.

They only had to have that conversation because Wilbur had made himself sick with anxious spiraling thoughts of what would happen to him if his parents died.

And then his parents died.

And now so did his aunt and uncle.

It's at this point in his life Wilbur decides that the only thing worse than losing your parents is losing your parents twice.

He's told to pack his bags.

And then he's told to repack, because he can't bring that much stuff with him.

Wilbur cries the entire time, and a few hours later he's placed with his first foster parents.

He's the only child there, which he's grateful for he guesses. He's overwhelmed enough as is.

The mother and father he's staying with meet him on the steps outside.

"Hello," the mother says, soft and sweet in a way that makes Wilbur ache, "I'm Mckenna and this is Robert. We're going to be your foster parents. Do you want to come inside or stay out here for a bit?"

Wilbur blinks back up at her, and shrugs.

"Okay," she says, "well we can hang out here until you're ready to go in."

Something inside of Wilbur tells him he's never going to be ready to go in.

When the sun starts to go down, he's urged in anyways. He's not ready for this. He's never going to be ready for this.

They aren't the best about the intersex thing, but they try.

They slip up on pronouns and his name but it's okay because they promise him he's trying.

They're trying. They are.

That makes it okay.

So why does it still hurt so much?

He starts cutting again, and this time he doesn't tell his guardians. With his aunt and uncle if he ever hurt himself, he always went to them. He trusted them, wanted their comfort, and they always helped and supported him.

With these strange faces, he doesn't bother asking for help.

He refuses to talk to them and red lines start to appear on his thighs. He pushes them away and breaks rules and they only meet him with kindness.

So eventually, he runs away.

He doesn't know where he's going. He's really not sure if he's going anywhere. He runs, and he runs and eventually he gets to a park he doesn't recognize and sits below one of the trees. He breathes in the cool night air and laughs. He feels at home, so free, and alive.

Then suddenly it all comes crashing down.

He ran away.

He ran away from his foster home because he has no one who cares about him, who really cares about him in the ways he needs.

Wilbur's alone.

He's always alone.

His laughs turn to tears turn to stargazing.

He almost falls asleep when the flashing lights wake him up.

He shoots up into a sitting position as the cops approach him. The first one- a woman- tells the other to stay back for a moment. She approaches him slowly, flashlight aimed down slightly and to the side as not blind him.

"Hey," she calls, "Wilbur?"

"Yeah, hi," he says.

"You have some pretty worried people looking for you," she tells him.

Wilbur scoffs.

"You ready to go home?"

Wilbur stays quiet. He doesn't have a home anymore.

"Wilbur, honey, I'm going to need you to come with me. You're breaking curfew right now."

He doesn't have a choice, and he knows that. Tears prick at the corners of his eyes.

"Two more minutes," he begs, "Two more minutes to look at the stars."

"Okay," the cop says, "two more minutes."

Wilbur spends the two minutes trying to find the big dipper. He's not sure what it looks like, or what season it appears during, but he tries anyway.

The two minutes are up before he finds it.

That family ends up giving him up, says that he's too stressful and they don't have the resources to manage a run risk. So Wilbur goes to the next home.

He spends the next months cutting himself, running away, and smoking. House after house starts optimistic before their faces begin to fall and then they pass him on like a disappointing toy.

Wilbur knows they really do try to help him. They give him therapy options and people to talk to and they send him to Alcoholics Anonymous and try to put him into sports to give him an outlet for his anger.

They try to help, they do. Wilbur thinks that in any other situations, he would have loved these families. They're good people, really. They try.

They try to help.

But Wilbur doesn't want help.

He needs someone more than trying.

Phil is just the next foster parent in a long line of foster parents.

Technoblade is where things are different.

Wilbur's had foster siblings before. Not many- he's been the only child in a foster home the majority of the time- but it's still happened.

But none of them are like Techno.

Techno is odd. He hums at weird times and never looks him in the eye and always sits at the same seat at the table.

He doesn't try to talk to Wilbur but also doesn't try to ignore him. He's always rambling about Greek mythology to a patient Phil and has no friends.

He's odd, and Wilbur doesn't know what to make him.

And then one day Techno approaches him.

"Do you know what a changeling is?" he asks, collapsing onto the couch next to Wilbur.

Wilbur turns to him.

"What?"

"A changeling," Techno repeats, "Do you know what it is?"

Wilbur shakes his head.

"I'm better with Greek mythology," Techno says, "but I'm good enough with fae shit."

"Fae?"

"Like faeries."

That really doesn't help Wilbur's understanding at all.

Techno sits up and taps his hand against his thigh.

"In mythology, changelings were swapped babies. Basically a fae would come in and swap a baby with their own baby, leaving the human family with what appeared to be their normal baby, but was in fact a changeling.

"Once placed in the home, the changing would take advantage of the families belief that it was their baby and act 'odd'. Se changelings would scream at nothing for hours, others had facial abnormalities. Some stared for too long, others never spoke at all. Changelings were just like the original child, but a little off."

Interesting and all, but Wilbur still has no idea why Techno's telling him some random urban legend.

"Parents would often get upset with the changeling. They'd say it wasn't really their child and because it was a changeling they would sometimes abuse the being- oftentimes through burning and poisoning. Many of them died. The parents didn't have remorse, because they had killed changeling and not their actual child. In their eyes they had defeated a beast."

And that took a turn. Okay creepy urban legend. What's Techno's point?

"There's no such thing as changelings," Techno says abruptly, "that's why it's a myth."

Wilbur chuckles.

"I know," he agrees, "you-"

"But myths are usually based on reality," Techno interrupts, "There's no such thing as changelings. Babies weren't replaced by fae.

"The reality is all these children that people claimed were changelings were actually just disabled. Most likely autistic children or babies with Down Syndrome."

Damn. People really find any excuse to be awful, don't they? Wilbur doesn't vocalize his thought.

"I'm autistic, y'know," Techno says.

"I know," Wilbur mutters, because he's already been told.

"Okay," Techno says. He stands up, and leaves the room.

Wilbur's not exactly what he's supposed to get from that conversation, but it's something. It's-he gets something.

He also gets scared because fuck now Techno actually seems to like him and Wilbur likes him. It's all so stressful and he kind of actually likes this place and he has so many thoughts and feelings that are way way too much and he doesn't know how to cope.

So he runs.

And he runs and he runs and he runs. He runs away a total of eleven times in three months. The first time he gets a mile. The last he just goes a few houses down before sitting on the sidewalk while Phil watches him from the doorstep until Wilbur begrudgingly picks up his body and stumbles home after thirty minutes in the cold.

Wilbur's used to running. He's also used to being caught.

Phil waiting for him is new.

In fact, after he runs for the fourth time, Phil asks him if he's ever thought about joining track. Wilbur says no. Phil tells him to think about it.

It's a week after his sixth run attempt that Phil finally finds out about the self harm. Wilbur's been keeping it on the down low, because right now he's barely avoiding being forced into therapy as is.

He's smart about it. He cuts on his thighs, not on his wrists. Occasionally, occasionally on his stomach. But a bit higher up, a third of the way up to his chest. That way if his shirt rides up, you still can't see the marks.

And he gets caught in the stupidest of ways. He cut too deep the other night, he knows he did. He tries to keep them light, clean so they don't get infected.

But he'd gone a bit too far and he'd bandaged it up and it was a mistake but it would heal.

The thing is, it bleeds more than Wilbur expects.

"Wilbur," Phil says, "is that, is that blood on your pants?"

Wilbur looks down with dawning horror as he sees a small red stain an inch or two up from his knee.

"No," Wilbur lies- pretty horribly might he add- and then races away, disappearing to his room.

Phil knocks on the door.

Wilbur says nothing

"Wil I'm going to have to open the door," Phil says, "I need to make sure you're safe."

Wilbur winces and says nothing. The door creaks open. He knows there's going to be a conversation.

"I'm fine," he says, and tries to think of an excuse, "I uh- I got my period. Wasn't expecting it."

Cis men don't like talking about periods, right? Phil will leave him alone if he brings up his cycle, right?

Phil blinks at him.

"I may not get periods," Phil opens, "but I'm pretty sure the blood doesn't come from your thigh."

Shit, that is a bit of a problem, isn't it?

"Wilbur," Phil says, "are you hurting yourself?"

"Uh..."

And that's the story of how Wilbur ends himself up in a second partial hospitalization program.

But this time- this time it's different.

All mental health facilities have their downfalls. It's a broken system where abuse is still regularly practiced and looking good on a chart is better than a patient's true recovery.

Wilbur knows that, recognizes that.

But this one's better than the last one and he thinks- Wilbur thinks it might actually have helped.

He stops cutting, and he starts talking to Phil more. He gets into a less intensive outpatient program with therapy two times a week and finally talks about the fact that sometimes he sort of wishes the car crash that had taken out his parents had taken him out instead.

Phil looks worried, and sometimes he cries when they're in therapy together.

It makes Wilbur feel guilty a lot of the time, because Phil's been nothing but good to him and here Wilbur is making his life harder.

"That's his problem," Techno points out when Wilbur vocalizes that problem over a game of Scrabble.

He has the urge to cut, and somehow Techno just knew, so they sat down and pulled out the scrabble board Wilbur is certain is older than even Phil.

And Phil's pretty old.

Phil finds them like that when they get home, arguing over words in Scrabble, specifically the spelling.

Wilbur's used an English spelling and Techno's arguing that it doesn't count because it isn't the americanized spelling.

"But it's English," Wilbur protests, "we're playing in English. I'm English. The language is English."

"It's not in the Scrabble dictionary," Techno insists, "only the Americanized version is."

"But it's English," Wilbur protests once more.

Techno's eyes flick up from the board, and to the front door.

"Phil, Wilbur's word isn't in the Scrabble dictionary."

"Then it doesn't count," Phil agrees immediately, before he even sets his bag down.

"But it is in the dictionary," Wilbur protests, "just not the English spelling, only the Americanized spelling."

"Oh, in that case, Wilbur's right," Phil agrees.

Techno splutters in defense and Phil moves over to join them.

Wilbur laughs at his expression as Phil studies the board with a small smile.

"You'd get more points if you stopped using big words and played with more word connecting or getting bonuses."

"But Phil," Techno protests, "words."

"Ah," he nods, "great point. Wilbur's winning, yeah?"

"Yup!" Wilbur agrees, "and Techno's just lost his turn because he challenged and was wrong."

"What! Was not! I was right! It's not in the dictionary, that's- you can't do that!"

"Can and did," Wilbur says, picking up his next four letters to spell 'soup.' He fits it in just right where he gets a bonus tile as well as spelling 'sore' and 'no' with the 's' and 'o' of 'soup.' It's a lot of points.

"Soup," Phil observes.

"Soup," Wilbur agrees.

Techno glares at the board.

"I will flip this table," Techno huffs. Wilbur knows it's an empty threat. Phil does too, because he rolls his eyes and laughs.

It's a great moment. A great moment with this family's a part of. Which means- which means it's time.

Wilbur can't do this. He can't.

Wilbur stumbles to his feet, and sprints out the door. He doesn't even bother grabbing a bag.

It's the first time he's run in weeks. It's also his last. He gets four houses down when he comes to an abrupt stop. His brain finally catches up with his feet and he finally realizes what he did.

He'd been doing so well, and then he just fucking ran again.

He falls to the ground, sitting criss-cross applesauce on the cement sidewalk.

He takes a deep breath in the chilly evening air. He spares a glance over his shoulder, looking back to the house he's just run from. He's surprised to see Phil sitting on the front steps.

"Hey," Phil calls, giving him a small wave from where he is, but makes no further attempts to get Wilburto come back.

Wilbur blinks at him, and turns away. He takes a few more shuddering breathes and then stares up at the stars.

After a few minutes, Phil calls out to him again.

"Can you see the Big Dipper?"

Wilbur blinks, and looks back at him again.

"I don't know what it looks like," he admits.

"What?"

"I don't know what it looks like," Wilbur calls back, a bit louder. A dog barks in the distance.

"Come here and I'll show you," Phil promises.

Wilbur huffs and rolls his eyes; it's such an obvious attempt to get home.

Phil gives him a smile, a stupid smirk. Wilbur gets back up to his feet anyways and walks the four houses back. He joins Phil on the house steps.

Phil smiles at him and asks if he can put an arm around his shoulder. Wilbur nods, and Phil pulls him into his side, letting his head rest against his heart.

Wilbur can feel the steady thump and he buries closer.

Phil then takes to pointing out the stars that form the Big Dipper, making sure Wilbur can spot each one before moving on to the next.

Together, they trace the entire thing.

It's a simple constellation, and the first one Wilbur truly learns.

They stare at it for a long time.

"Hey," Phil whispers eventually, "can I adopt you?"

Wilbur chokes on his own spit.

"Uh, yeah," he insists, working around the lump in his throat, "yeah, I'd like that."

"Okay," Phil says, "then consider it done."

The only thing worse than losing one set of parents is two.

The only thing that allows Wilbur to heal from that, is gaining Phil.

He has a lot to thank Phil for. Most of all, is saving his life.

Or maybe not saving his life, Phil likes to insist that Wilbur did that himself, that Wilbur made his own choice to live and that he should give himself for that.

Maybe instead what Phil gave him was the opportunity to thrive. Thrive instead of just surviving.

When he gets adopted, Phil gives a scrapbook. The first pages are covered in recovered photos of his parents, baby photos of Wilbur, and their wedding invitation. The middle pages are of his aunt and uncle, of them holding his hand in the hospital and him falling asleep on his aunt.

Wilbur has no idea how he got the pictures. He didn't even know he had them.

Later Techno explains he had found an SD card in the small camera Wilbur had carried with him for years. Wil had barely used it, and didn't even know the card had photos on it. It's why he let Techno have it.

Most of the pictures he's never seen before. He cries when he finally sees them.

The later pages are more offamilar. Photos of Phil, Wilbur, and Techno. Of them growing, becoming a family, existing together. Wilbur flips through the pages slowly, fondly.

A fair amount of the book is still left blank. When Wilbur shoots Phil a confused look all his father says is, "You have so much more to live for."

Wilbur sets to filling in the pages himself.

Tommy enters, and in he goes. Even when Wilbur's mad at him, even when Tommy blackmails him and takes his meds, Wilbur knows he couldn't imagine anyone else as his little brother.

Ranboo's next, a briefer period, a shorter stay- but just as significant to their family.

There's a few pages after him, sprinkled with Sally and college friends and Techno's dog and his family.

Now, with one page left, a full scrapbook, Wilbur sets to filling in his little fungi's page. A completed chapter of this story.

And then on to the next.

Because as he looks at his child with his wide grin and wandering eyes something comes over him and in that moment Wilbur knows that he's never wanted anything more in his life.

Wilbur wants to live.

Wilbur wants to live for his parents, his aunt and uncle, for Phil and his brothers, for Ranboo, and Sally and his friends and god Wilbur wants to live for his child for this living breathing thing that he created and formed himself.

But most of all, Wilbur wants to live for himself.

And isn't that just the most spectacular thing?

Chapter End Notes

A rough one for sure, but it'll be worth it

Also new update is so good omg I'm in love I've been doing all the mining and crafting.

~Cool Community Things to Check Out!~

Encompass Sandbox Project: The official guide to the Encompass Sandbox Project- a project in which users are encouraged to take inspiration from the encompass series and create their own varying works of fiction from writing, to art, and so much more.

encompass: the sandbox: encompass: the sandbox is the official collection for the Encompass Sandbox Project.

encompass: behind the scenes: an insider look at everything that goes on in the encompass series. This series will feature Q&A, projects, plans, and other behind the scenes content.

growing and grieving

Chapter Summary

A baby and two families.

Chapter Notes

CW: discussion of dead parents/aunt's/uncle's, discussion of car accidents and drunk driving, tics, feels of betrayal, fears of failure, discussion of death and medical episodes, failure of medical fields to give proper care/referrals, ableism

There is a very emotional reveal in this one. There's no blanket CW for it but I do feel that it deserves recognition as something potentially upsetting to readers.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Turns out things aren't much better after the entire breaking his water emergency c section thing. Because guess what he gets to do when he gets out of the hospital?

More bedrest.

Wilbur groans at the orders, even though he was fully aware of this outcome.

"Dude you just got major surgery," Tommy points out, "stomach got all sliced up and stuff. Sit the fuck down."

To be fair, Tommy had a point. And his body does hurt quite a bit.

He's just so sick of sitting and laying down.

At least this time he has some company.

And speak of the devil, little baby Nora is crying again.

"Oh sh sh sh," Wilbur says gently, holding her to his belly, "you're okay sweetie, everything's alright. Are you hungry, huh? Your diaper's fine. Or did you just want some cuddles?"

"I'll get her a bottle," Tommy says.

Wilbur smiles after him.

"Thanks," he says.

Tommy blushes at the praise.

"You look like shit," he bites back quickly, and then disappears.

Wilbur watches him go fondly. When he's fully disappeared, he goes back to staring at his daughter.

"Hello little one," he whispers.

She blinks at him.

"I'm so happy to have you here with me," he says, "I was a little worried, you know, that something would go wrong."

She continues to blink. She's much too small to do anything else.

"And I'm glad you don't have what I have," Wilbur says, "I- I mean intersex is part of who I am, yeah? But it's caused a lot of grief overtime. Physically and mentally. I'm glad you won't have to deal with that."

"With what?" Tommy asks, reentering the room.

Wilbur turns his head slightly, making sure not to disturb his daughter in the process.

"Being intersex."

"Wait, they know she- killed a women, just, just killed a women- they know she isn't? I thought you didn't find out until you were a teen."

"I didn't," Wilbur agrees, "it didn't show up on my screening because they didn't screen for it then."

Tommy gives him a funny look. His lips pop with a tic.

"What do you have?" he asks, "I've never asked."

"An adrenal condition," Wilbur explains, "it affects cortisol, sodium, potassium, and sex hormones. In addition there's a fair amount of spicy mutations. Of which I also have."

"Sounds- POGGERS- fun," Tommy says.

"Mhmm, be glad you took my antidepressants and not my other shit or I definitely would have died."

The room goes quiet.

And oh, maybe that's a bit too close to home. Wilbur's still high on pain meds. Everything feels fluffy even if he is incredibly sore.

Who knew getting cut open was this complicated?

"Really?" Tommy says.

And oh- good. Tommy doesn't sound guilty like Wilbur feared. He just sounds curious, and maybe a little worried.

"Yeah, maybe. Shit fucked me up when I was going through puberty that I almost went into a coma."

"Oh. Damn."

"Yeah. It's one of the reasons I'm more okay with Nora here not dealing with all of this. I mean I guess there's still a decent chance, being intersex is as common as being a redhead- but she doesn't have what I have."

"Wait- wait, stop!- really, being intersex is that common?"

"Mhmm," Wilbur says.

"Fuck gingers," Tommy says, "can you imagine me as a ginger?"

Wilbur doesn't hate gingers as much as Tommy seems to. Even so it's weird to imagine his very blond brother with red hair. He snorts at the mental image.

"Fair enough."

Wilbur glances over at Tommy again.

"Come cuddle," he encourages, "You gotta get to know the new kid on the block. And she does need her bottle."

Tommy grumbles a little bit about being a big man and not wanting cuddles, but he clamors into bed anyways. And if Wilbur falls asleep with Nora in his arms and Tommy's head on his shoulder watching his niece carefully- well then at least he knows he has his brother looking out for his kid.

It's a peaceful sleep. One of the last he'll get for a long time.

But after that, Tommy starts avoiding Fungi.

Nora, her name is Nora. Wilbur really needs to remember that. Everyone just tends to call her by her nickname.

Which is Fungi, because of course it is.

And Tommy, Tommy's avoiding her.

Wilbur can't figure out why.

When Wilbur enters a room with her in his arms, Tommy will dart out with a poor little excuse. He does his best not to be around her and avoids being with her alone at all.

Wilbur had asked him to watch her for two minutes the other day so he could use their bathroom and Tommy had gotten wide eyed and scurried away.

Wilbur had to pee while holding a crying baby to his chest. Not exactly an ideal situation.

And Wilbur, Wilbur didn't know why Tommy's doing this.

Because Tommy loves Nora, that much was obvious. While he had been avoiding her, he also still talks about her nonstop. He talks about her smile and her laughter and whenever he even says her name he gets this extremely fond look on his face that Wilbur's never seen him have before.

So Tommy obviously loves Nora, so why does he keep avoiding her?

Wilbur eventually decides to just ask.

"Why are you avoiding Fungi? " he asks, sitting cross legged on the floor as his daughter sits half in his lap and half on the floor, deeply investigating the rug instead of her many many toys.

The entire time, Tommy's been scrunched up on the couch, eyeing her warily. It hasn't even been five minutes.

"I am not avoiding her," Tommy protests hotly.

Wilbur raises his eyebrows.

"Techno?" Tommy calls, looking up as Techno enters the living room from down the hall to his room. "Tell Wilbur I- just killed a woman, feeling good- I'm not avoiding Fungi."

"You're definitely ignoring Fungi," Techno states, and moves past them to the back door, disappearing to the garden.

As quickly as he appeared, he's gone.

"I'm not avoiding Fungi," Tommy pouts.

Wilbur rolls his eyes. He's supposed to only have one child on his hands.

"Okay," he says, "fine. Then hypothetically, I guess, why would you avoid Fungi.'

Tommy glowers at him. His fists tighten and his entire body gets tense and even his eyes get shiny.

Wait, his eyes get shiny?

Why- what?

"Hey," Wilbur says, much gentler this time, "Tommy, it's okay. I just- I'm trying to understand here."

Tommy sniffs. He's yet to cry. Wilbur hopes that's a good thing.

"I just- Tommy starts, and then trails off. His head jerks up to the side in a few quick tics.

"Remember that stupid high school baby project"

"Yeah?"

"Well last year Tubbo- hey, mate- and Ranboo did it together."

"I remember," Wilbur says dryly. God those things were way worse then the real thing.

"And- and- hey POGGERS- y'know, Ranboo- POGGERS- asked me to hold it once," Tommy continues.

Wilbur nods in encouragement.

"And- hey- well, he passed me Michael- the plastic demon baby."

An accurate description.

"And I- killed a woman, feeling good- I dropped him," Tommy says, voice suddenly very small, "I dropped Michael."

Oh.

Oh.

"Tommy," Wilbur says slowly, smoothly, "you're not doing to drop Fungi.

He sniffs.

"You don't know that," Tommy protests.

Wilbur sighs, and then pulls Fungi back to him, pulling her into his arms. He stands with her and moves to the couch.

"Okay," Wilbur says, "it's time to work on this fear of yours.

Tommy blinks, but nods.

Tommy's already sitting, so Wilbur scoots across the couch until their knees are brushing.

"Hold out your hands," Wilbur encourages, "Yup, just like that."

Tommy's trembling, but he is actually holding out his arms.

"POGGERS," he shouts and his head aggressively jerks up to the side before banging down.

He pulls his hands away.

“Shit,” he curses, and then, “just killed a woman, feeling good. Just- just killed a woman. POGGERS wooo-”

He keeps doing that head jerk tic he’s had forever and eye blinks are being thrown in. Wilbur can even tell that toe tic he’s recently developing is going off if Tommy’s wiggling feet under his socks are anything to go by.

He pulls his hand in again, forms a fist, and punches his chest.

Wilbur winces, that definitely had to hurt.

Tommy keeps ticcing, Wilbur only intervening to soothe him and catch his hand to avoid it making such harsh contact with his chest again.

Eventually, the tic attack ends.

“Fuck,” Tommy groans, and Wilbur hates that there’s tears forming in his eyes.

“See?” Tommy says, “I’m just going to hurt her.”

“I’ll be right here,” Wilbur promises, “You won’t hurt her.”

Wilbur doesn’t mention the fact that Tommy’s tics probably only got that bad because he’s anxious about this whole thing anyways. Wilbur doesn’t want to set off a fresh round of tics, so he just lets it go.

“Hands out,” Wilbur pushes. He’s gentle with his words, but gives that firm push he knows Tommy needs.

Tommy sighs, but puts his hands out again.

Carefully, Wilbur sets Nora in his arms.

“Oh,” Tommy says, “Oh wow.”

“Is this really the first time you’ve held her?”

Tommy doesn’t respond at all for a moment, before gently nodding.

“Huh,” Wilbur says, “Well now you have.

Tommy’s stopped paying attention to him at that point though. Instead he’s staring down at Fungi, tickling her small toes and getting lost in her eyes, absent head tics the only thing breaking their gaze.

“I love you,” he says.

Wilbur melts. He wishes he could keep this moment with him forever.

"She loves you too," Wilbur promises, voice barely above a whisper, "I promise you she does. I know she does. Tommy, you're- you really are going to be a great uncle."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah."

"Okay."

After that, Tommy stops being quite so scared around baby Fungi. And Wilbur gets a little bit of his wish to stay in that moment together when Techno sends him a photo of the three of them on the couch that he had somehow sneakily taken.

Those first few weeks are exhaustion fueled bliss. Wilbur recovers beautifully. Of course, it still takes forever, and eventually he finally gets the clear to start back on testosterone which may or may not have made him cry.

God is he glad to start T again.

Things are going well. So so very well.

And then enters Phil with the news

"Hey," Phil whispers quietly from where Wilbur is setting Nora down in her bassinet, "have a minute?"

Wilbur holds up a finger and tends to his daughter a bit more before turning to his father.

"Yeah? What's up?"

"I got a voicemail," Phil admits, "from Sally."

Wilbur stops on his tracks. He hasn't heard a word from Sally since the night she told him to leave. Not even a text. To Wilbur's knowledge, his number is still blocked.

But for some reason, she chose now to make contact. But she didn't make contact with Wilbur. No, that would be too easy. Instead she reached out to Phil.

Phil. Why Phil?

"Oh?" he says weakly.

"She wants you to hear the message," Phil says, "I've heard it already. You can listen, I can give you the recap, or we can move on and forget this all ever happened."

Wilbur swallows, and makes his decision.

"I want to hear it," he decides.

"Okay," Phil agrees. He passes over his phone, the message from an unknown number already pulled up.

"Hey," Sally says, and Wilbur almost pukes.

He pauses it as quickly as possible.

"No," he insists, "I can't."

"Okay," Phil says, "I'll save it. You ever want to listen to you, you let me know."

Wilbur nods.

"She is offering child support," Phil mentions, "that's all I'll go into."

Fuck. That would- well that would help a lot considering Wilbur had to take a semester off and doesn't have a full time job along with school to pay for. Phil's helping, obviously, but neither would deny the support would be incredibly helpful.

"I don't want to deal with that," Wilbur confesses, even though he knows he has to.

"I can do it," Phil says.

Wilbur gives him a look, that edge of guilt creeping in. Phil's already done so much for him. Wilbur can't make him do more.

"Wil," Phil continues, "let me do this for you."

Something inside of Wilbur breaks, and he manages a shallow nod. Phil can easily tell that he's hit his breaking point, because moments later he's wrapped up in a big hug.

He's so lucky to have his family. Phil's going to make an amazing grandfather.

And Tommy really does become a great uncle. So does Techno, so does Ranboo. But Tommy and Phil are the two living at home, so Fungi gets used to the three of them the most. Phil, Tommy, and Wilbur.

It's a moment with the three of them that Nora says her first word.

She's been babbling lots lately and they've all known it would happen eventually but none of them are super experts or expecting to hit milestones dead on so when Nora says her first word four months later than normal, well it's just that, a word.

But what the word is...

Dad would have made sense. Uncle. Tommy, Papa. Phil.

Simple words like dog, cat, go, sit, food, mine, no. There's so many options to choose from.

But no, Nora's first word is...

"Fundy!" she squeals during a game of pretending they can't find her. It's a game similar to hide and seek, except she doesn't know how to hide yet and they pretend they're horrible at seeking. "Fundy!"

Instantly they all turn to her.

“Fundy,” she insists, “Fundy!”

She points to herself, jabbing into her chest with her chubby thumbs as she bounces on the floor.

“Baba ga Fundy!”

That’s when Wilbur realizes what she’s trying to say.

“Oh my gosh,” he says, “Fundy. Fungi. It’s- she’s saying fungi.”

“No!” Tommy instantly groans, “That nickname is going to haunt me forever.”

“That’s your own fault mate,” Phil says, ignoring Tommy’s dramatics for the most part as he looks with admiration at his granddaughter. “Fundy. Wow.”

She stops her bouncing, crawling toward a discarded toy on the floor and instantly trying to shove it in her mouth. Baby’s just do shit like that. Wilbur lets her, it’s mouth safe anyways.

So Fundy she becomes.

When she’s three, Fundy becomes more than a nickname.

“Dada,” she says, “I’m Fundy.”

“Yeah,” Wilbur says, “Yes you are.”

Fundy frowns at him.

“No,” she says, “I want to be Fundy. Uh. I want to be me Fundy.”

Wilbur...

What?

Wilbur isn’t quite sure what she’s saying.

“Sorry sweetie, I don’t understand.”

“I just wanna be Fundy,” she says, “No Nora.”

“Oh. Okay. We don’t have to call you Nora anymore.”

They hardly do anyways.

“No!” she whines, “No!”

Phil sends him a glance from where he’s just walked into the room. Wilbur takes to gently bouncing his daughter on his hip.

“What’s no sweetheart?” he decides to decipher.

But Fundy’s devolving, quickly going from whining to short sobbing. Wilbur bounces and turns, trying to figure out where this is coming from when she spots Phil.

“Papa!” she cries, making grabby hands for him.

Phil steps over and Wilbur trades his daughter to him. Phil takes her easily, hiking him onto his own hip and cooing at her.

“Hey baby, what’s the matter,” he asks.

“Just Fundy!” she repeats, “No more Nora.”

“Okay,” he confirms, “no more Nora.”

Wilbur doesn’t get a more conclusive answer until later that night. Wilbur had put her down for bed like usual, but she had been asking for her Papa, so Wilbur had given her a final kiss and sent Phil in for bedtime wishes and a final tuck in.

When Phil leaves her room, gently shutting the door closed behind him, Wilbur’s waiting on the other side.

“She asleep?” Wil asks.

“Headed there,” Phil confirms.

They both head out past the kitchen and into the living room.

“I think we need to talk about something,” Phil says.

A spike of fear runs through Wilbur’s entire body in an instant.

“Yeah?” he barely breathes.

“Nothing bad,” Phil promises, “It’s okay, we’re all okay.”

Wilbur releases the tension in his shoulder. God you really think Phil would get better at not almost giving him anxiety attacks after all these years. And you’d really think that Wilbur would stop freaking out at the slightest thing after all these years.

“Okay,” Wil says, “Yeah, what’s up.”

“Fundy’s a boy,” Phil says, “That’s what he was trying to say earlier. He told me when I said goodnight. He doesn’t want to be Nora anymore as in he doesn’t want to be a girl anymore. He just wants to be Fundy, as a boy.”

“Oh,” Wilbur whispers, “Oh...”

His daughter- his son, he’s trans. Or, well, it seems like Fundy hasn’t quite put a label on it himself yet, but that’s unsurprising considering he’s literally three years old.

But seemingly, seemingly...

“He’s trans,” Wilbur realizes.

“Yeah,” Phil says.

“Dad, do you know what this means?”

“What?”

“Dad, Dad, me, his mom, him. We’re a trans family. A tranily. Transily? Famgender? Why do all of these sound like slurs? Okay but dad we’re all trans.”

“Congrats.”

“Okay Dad, I love you and I know you are very very cis but I need you to be more excited about this.”

“Congrats!” Phil repeats, this time with a bit more energy.

“Better,” Wilbur approves.

Fundy stays Fundy, minus the Nora. If it’s what works for him, its what works for Wilbur,

Of course, Tommy is very upset. He’d done his hardest to leave the fun guy/Fungi/Fundy nickname in the past, and now his nephew was choosing it to be his permanent name. Rip Tommy, Wilbur guesses. Sucks to be him.

So Fundy’s a boy now, how about that? The pediatrician is a little confused, but she sees Wilbur’s steady gaze and doesn’t comment.

That said, she and every other doctor Wilbur goes to refuses to test Fundy for autism. Which is bullshit in Wilbur’s mind, because he’s so obviously autistic. Like, if the stimming didn’t already give it away maybe the noise sensitivity did or the missed social cues or making friends with peers outside his age group exclusively or a billion of other symptoms Wilbur could recite off the top of his head.

But no, apparently Fundy was meeting his benchmarks fine and could make eye contact and was verbal and social and liked talking to strangers so he couldn’t be autistic.

Basically, it’s been a stressful week.

“It’s bullshit,” Wilbur grumbles, careful to speak low with the knowledge that Fundy’s just a few feet ahead of them and they’re surrounded by children on all sides. Fundy is wearing his ear defenders to protect against the noise, but still. Kid’s got a sharp ear.

“You’re telling me,” Techno grumbles right back.

“I- I mean they won’t even give me a referral,” Wilbur says, “And because he’s so young and he’s afab with no referral, nowhere’s willing to test him.”

"Did you say his uncle is autistic? Genetics and shit."

"No," Wilbur grumbles, "I've already given them family history and so they know there's no blood relation between us and therefore no genetic component."

"Environmental," Techno throws out, "say two out of four kids in the house you grew up in were autistic."

"Except you were diagnosed before moving in and Ranboo has notes in their file from before of suspected autism. And unfortunately, they know that shit because I didn't think I need to give half fucking lies to get my son tested for autism."

"Do you need to test him?" Techno asks.

"No," Wilbur admits, "But it seems like it would be good long term. Easier to get him an IEP in school and any other support services he needs elsewhere."

"True," Techno shrugs.

"I couldn't imagine my teen years without my IEP. I mean I was failing out of middle school."

Sure some of that was because doctors didn't fucking listen when Wilbur said something was wrong and oh, now why does that give him a strange sense of dejavu.

Sarcasm is an old friend of his.

"I was homeschooled until Phil... so... but yeah," Techno adds, shrugging, "I mean I probably still would have upped and left class and worn my headphones regardless of accommodations but it was nice to hypothetically not get in trouble for that."

"Hypothetically definitely being the key word here," Wilbur drawls.

Techno gives him a small smirk.

"Dad! Uncle T! Come see, come see! They got the astronauts."

"Coming," Wilbur promises, and the two of them hurry to catch up, "And Fundy, hun, indoor voice please."

Volume control, another clear sign to add to the list of Fundy is autistic but is yet to get a diagnosis.

"Okay daddy, but look!" Fundy points at some sort of NASA replica.

"Mhhm," Wilbur says, showing his son he's interested, "Very cool kiddo. What do you like about it?"

Fundy's hands flap vigorously.

"It's a wing dad. When the ships go up they can't all go up so they let their wings off and this is a uh- uh copy cause the real ones are stuck in space!"

"Oh wow, really?" Wilbur says. And okay yes, he knows all of this already but Wilbur's not about to stop his son from infrodumping to him.

"Yeah huh!" Fundy agrees, "Want me to read you the sign daddy?"

"I would love that," Wilbur agrees.

Fundy nods and turns back to the plaque in front of him that he has gripped tightly in his hands. He stares at it for a few moments before leaning over to his uncle.

"Uncle T," he half whispers, "Can you help me read the sign?"

"Sure kiddo," Techno agrees, an amused little smile playing across his lips as both him and Wilbur try not to laugh.

Techno helps Fundy out, reading most of the words for him and helping him sound out smaller ones and point out the ones he knows. Together they make it through it, Techno whispers words and definitions into his ear as Fundy repeats them louder for Wilbur to hear.

Wilbur listens intently the entire time, nodding on in all the right places and pretending he definitely doesn't hear his brother speaking right next to him.

Something warm burns in Wilbur as he watches his brother and son interact. He's so lucky to have this family, to have built this and gained this.

He still misses his parents, his aunt and uncle. He doesn't think he could ever stop missing them. But that doesn't mean he can't also appreciate what he's gained.

He's transparent about that fact, open and willing to explain it to Fundy. Therefore, it's not a surprise when Wilbur's family comes up.

Fundy is seven when he asks him. They've never hid the whole adoption thing from him, the kid's life is an open book to him. He knows Phil's his grandad and that Wilbur's parents and then aunt and uncle passed away.

But it isn't until he's seven that he asks how.

"Uhm, how did your mommy and daddy die?" he asks, "I know grandpa adopted you after, but, if it's okay, if you're okay telling me... what happens to your old parents?"

Wilbur takes a breath, and nods. He'd prepared for this moment. It doesn't make it any easier.

"My mommy and daddy died in a car crash," Wilbur says. "Sometimes, people make bad choices and drive when they shouldn't. And someone made that bad choice, and they crashed into another car. And that was the car my parents were in."

"Oh," Fundy said, "oh. That's really sad."

"Yeah," Wilbur agrees, "yeah it is."

It's been decades. Wilbur doesn't even remember them. It still doesn't hurt any less.

"Did the other person- the one who made the bad choice, did they ever try and say sorry and make it up to them? Did they try an' do better?"

Wilbur blinks.

He doesn't know what he expected Fundy to ask next, but that definitely was not it.

"I don't know," he admits. "I don't know."

And that's how he finds himself digging through his family's old things, trying to find anything about his parent's death.

He finds a few things. The most interesting, a newspaper clipping about a terrible accident- drunk driver- four dead.

The victims were Wilbur's parents. The people in the other car...

Elizabeth and Jacob Watson.

Elizabeth and Jacob Watson.

He reads it again.

Elizabeth and Jacob.

Wilbur blinks.

He pulls out his phone.

Wilbur: dad. your moms name was Elizabeth, right. And ur dads name was Jacob?

Dad: yeah. y?

Wilbur freezes. His fingers seem to type on auto pilot, even as the rest of Wilbur's body is stuck. He doesn't even see what he's typing.

Wilbur: fundy was asking. wanted to make sure I didn't mess their names up

Phil sends him back a thumbs up, and Wilbur sets his phone down with a thud.

God.

It- it can't be.

Phil's parents died in a drunk driving accident. They were the ones that were drunk. They had died when Phil was in college. That was around the same time that Wilbur was a young kid, around when his parents had died. The names lined up.

Wilbur didn't know the date of when Phil's parents died, but he did know it was February. And well, so we're his parents' deaths.

But there was- well it had to be a coincidence, right?

Once is an incident.

One crash.

Twice is a coincidence.

Two families.

Three times is a pattern.

Three surviving blood relatives: Phil, Wilbur, and Fundy.

Holy shit, Phil's parents killed Wilbur's.

Phil's parents killed Wilbur's.

But they couldn't because Wilbur knows, Wilbur knows that Phil said that his parents were the only ones in the crash.

But there's no way this is a coincidence so Phil has to be lying, right? Unless-

Unless Phil knew.

Did Phil... did Phil know?

"Daddy," Fundy says, "Daddy are you okay?"

Wilbur's heart beats in his chest louder.

"Hey sweetie," he says, "can you do me a big favor?"

Fundy nods eagerly.

"Can you go find uncle Tommy and Techno out back and stay with them? And ask them to get your Papa for me please. Tell him Daddy needs him right now."

"Okay," Fundy agrees, and then he scurries off.

God Wilbur has never been so grateful for his family to be visiting right now.

Wilbur does his best to get some semblance of control over his breathing.

He doesn't.

But at least Phil is there soon enough.

"Wil?" his dad calls, only to find Wilbur hyperventilating in their living room.

"Oh kiddo," he says, and instantly drops to the floor with Wilbur."

"I can't breathe," Wilbur wheezes out, "I can't- I can't breathe."

God he knows this happens every time he has a panic attack but they don't call it a panic attack for nothing.

"I know, mate," Phil soothes, "You're having a panic attack. I know it feels like you can't breathe, but let's try to take some deep breaths."

But Wilbur didn't invite Phil over here to help him calm down. Wilbur invited him over to get the truth.

"Did you know?" Wilbur gasps, "did you know?"

"Know what?" Phil says, "let's just focus on breathing first," he insists.

"No!" Wilbur wheezes, and pushes his father away, "No. Did you know?"

He takes another gulping breathe and god he's really not getting enough oxygen maybe this is a heart attack and not a panic attack or some other unknown medical condition manifesting-

"Wil, please," Phil begs, "please. Let's just try to take a deep breath."

"Did you know your parents killed mine?"

Phil instantly stills. A second later he pulls away from Wilbur. It's enough of a shock that Wilbur's messed up breathing almost goes back to even.

"What?"

Wilbur kicks the newspaper clipping across to him.

"Did you know?" he demands.

Wordlessly, Phil holds up the page, scrolling down it. His fingers find the offending words and trace over them.

"Wil," he says, own breath stuttering. "Wil."

His eyes have a hollow look that Wilbur's never seen before and Phil's positively wilting.

And it's in that moment that Wilbur realizes that Phil absolutely did not know a thing about this.

Oh. Shit. That's a bit of an issue.

They stare at each other a moment more, Wilbur's breath growing uneven once more. After a few seconds Phil stumbles to his feet, and walks out of the room.

God, Wilbur really fucked up, didn't he. The heaving cries return.

"Hey," a gentle voice says a moment later, crouching down to his level. "Phil said you might need me."

And all Wilbur can do is let himself tilt into Tommy's arms.

Chapter End Notes

That awkward moment when you find out your adoptive dad's parents are responsible for your bio parents death ahaha

Also, as I do every time at the second to last chapter, announcement for the next fic!

The next encompass fic will feature, drumroll please, RANBOO. fav Oreo man.

More details soon.

~Cool Community Things to Check Out!~

[Encompass Sandbox Project](#): The official guide to the Encompass Sandbox Project- a project in which users are encouraged to take inspiration from the encompass series and create their own varying works of fiction from writing, to art, and so much more.

[encompass: the sandbox](#): encompass: the sandbox is the official collection for the Encompass Sandbox Project.

[encompass: behind the scenes](#): an insider look at everything that goes on in the encompass series. This series will feature Q&A, projects, plans, and other behind the scenes content.

right here

Chapter Summary

Wilbur and Phil need to have a talk, and Fundy continues to grow up as their family does its best to heal.

Chapter Notes

CW: discussion of parent death, car accidents, intense guilt, trauma responses, bullying, ableism, transphobia, general anxiety, yelling, alcoholism (discussed), death (discussed), taking responsibility for actions that aren't your own as a trauma response

AUTHORS NOTE: There's some very important announcements in the end notes, I would very much appreciate if you took a minute to read them.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Wilbur avoids Phil for the next few days. He feels so guilty about this entire mess that he does his best not to bother his father.

God Wilbur had pretty much said that Phil knew that his parents killed his own and held that information from him. How absurd is that. How dumb.

Of course he would never.

Yet Wilbur had gotten mad at Phil for something he didn't even do.

So he was avoiding his dad.

Especially because Wilbur knows that Phil is going to try to apologize to Wilbur, when really it should be the other way around.

But it's pretty hard to avoid someone you live with, especially when he's helping raise your kid.

"Is Papa gonna join us for the park?" Fundy asks.

"No sweetie, just us today."

Fundy frowns, absolutely wilting at the answer.

"Why not?"

Usually Wilbur does his best to give his kid a reason, an explanation. He feels that Fundy deserves one. Fundy is his own tiny little being able to comprehend things and Wilbur hates the idea of being the parent that pulls rank because they're the adult.

'Because I said so,' sounds incredibly frustrating. Phil had always given him an explanation, even if it wasn't one Wilbur liked.

It gave him empathy and understanding in situations. He does his best to copy that with Fundy.

Except now.

"Just cause," he says, "now go grab your boots."

Fundy perks up at the mention of his rainboots and races off. He's been a bit obsessed with them lately for no reason at all but at least the rainy weather gives him an opportunity to use them.

Phil is mentioned again until much later in their trip to lark.

"Is Papa mad at me?" Fundy asks, "was I bad?"

"No," Wilbur quickly soothes, "of course not. Papa loves you. Why would you think that?"

Fundy shrugs and sniffles.

"Cause he's not doing stuff with us lately. Didn't come to the park and didn't play and didn't tuck me in why you read to me."

Wilbur's heart breaks. He hadn't realized how much of his avoiding Phil had also affected Fundy.

"Oh no baby, I promise Papa isn't mad. He's just been really busy lately and-"

And Wilbur hates lying to his kid. Plus this could be a great teaching moment. Wilbur just has to suck up the courage and get this over with.

"Actually," Wilbur admits, "I said something mean to Papa a few days ago and I think I hurt his feelings. And I don't know how to say sorry, so I've been keeping away from him because I feel bad about it."

Fundy turns his head to the side.

"Why don't you know how to say sorry. You just say 'Sorry Papa-' or, or for you, you say 'Sorry Daddy. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings.' and then Papa goes 'Okay. Thanks for 'ologizing' and then he gives you a big hug and things are okay again."

Wilbur's never been more proud of his son. Because it really is that simple, isn't it?

The conversation's going to be difficult, years of half healed trauma being excavated. It won't be easy. But starting that conversation, breaking the ground... Wilbur can do that.

"You're right," Wilbur says, "you're so smart, you know that?"

"Yup! I know!" Fundy grins, cheeky smirk dancing across his lips.

Wilbur smiles at him, Fundy's positive energy has always been contagious like that.

"Oh, you do, huh? Did you learn that from your Uncle Tommy or your Uncle Techno, huh?"

Fundy giggles.

"Not telling unless you catch me," he insists, and then races off across the grass. Wilbur sighs, but heaves himself up to go chasing down his son. He could catch him easily, but that makes the game way less fun so Wilbur let's him get at least a foot of distance as he pretends to not quite reach him.

It's nice, this moment with his son. He's not ready for it to be over.

But it has to end eventually with the sun going down and Wilbur promising to Fundy that he'd apologize to 'Papa.' So once Fundy's tucked in and ready for bed, Wilbur goes to find him.

He knocks on his dad's door, waiting momentarily for a response.

"Come in," Phil calls.

Wilbur pushes the door gently open, stepping in. He almost tip toes, scared of shattering whatever uneasy plain their relationship currently stands on.

Phil turns, and looks at him. He must see something in Wilbur- maybe the obvious tenseness or the way Wilbur can't meet his eyes- because he instantly wilts.

"Oh," Phil says, "oh."

It's not like Wilbur's been ignoring his dad completely. They have talked, it's kind of impossible not to when they live in the same house. But they haven't even sort of begun to figure out what's happened between them.

"So uh," Wilbur says.

"I'm sorry," Phil says instantly, squeezing his eyes shut tight, "god Wilbur, I'm so sorry. I promise I had no idea and- I can't even imagine I- Wilbur I am so so sorry-"

"Don't," Wilbur says, cutting his dad off. A burning anger begins to bubble up inside him. "Just- just don't."

As quickly as the anger in Wilbur rises, it falls. His shoulders slump, and he sighs. He's suddenly exhausted, weary down to his bones.

"Why do you do that?" he asks.

Phil blinks at him.

"Do what," he asks.

"Apologize for things that aren't your fault?"

The two of them stare at one another for a moment.

"I- um."

Wilbur waits. Phil shrugs.

"I just- I want to make things better," Phil admits, "and I don't know how."

"Oh," Wilbur says, "well um, it doesn't really make things better."

Phil freezes, and Wilbur watches his face shatter and then sees as he quickly tries to smile, plastering it all back up. He winces at the action.

"But that's- that's not your fault, you know that dad? It's not- this isn't yours to apologize for. You saying sorry doesn't make it better because, well because you had nothing to do with it."

"But they were my parents," Phil says weakly.

"Is it my fault my parents were in a car accident?"

Phil startles physically, taking a half step back as if he can't quite believe the words that came out of Wilbur's mouth.

"No. Of course not."

"Then why is it your fault?" Wilbur pushes.

"Because your parents weren't drunk."

"But you had no control over it."

"Well, sure but-"

"No," Wilbur snaps, "no, you don't get to be sorry about this." Phil takes a step back. "You know, it's really hard to fucking grieve my parents dying when you keep making this about you."

There's a silence that grows between them.

"I-" Wilbur says, "I-"

He doesn't know what to say. He can't say he's sorry, that he went too far because, well, he told the truth.

"I'm sorry," Phil says.

And fuck, why doesn't he get it?

Wilbur doesn't want an apology, not from Phil.

"I- I'm grieving to," Phil admits, "I'm grieving the fact that my parents hurt you just as much if not more than they hurt me. I- I'm grieving too."

"Oh," Wilbur chokes out.

"But you're right," Phil says, "It um- it isn't fair to make your grief about me. We- we can both grieve in tandem without stepping on toes and I- I don't mean to infringe my grief on yours."

Wilbur blinks, nods. That- well that seems fair.

"And Wil- I promise, I promise I didn't know."

"I know," Wilbur says softly, because he really does know. The look of pure shock on Phil's face the other night was something that can't be faked.

"Um," Wilbur starts, "but um, well... How did you not know? You- well, I had always- you said it was just your parents in the crash."

Phil closes his eyes, scrunching them tight before opening them again.

"It was- or, I thought it was," he says- "I, that's what I was told. My aunt- she uh, she was the one who got the news first. She's the one that called me. I- I don't know why she lied."

"Aunt Margaret," Wilbur remembers.

"Yeah, you maybe met her once before she died," Phil remembers, "I didn't uh- I mean I never knew her really well. She was pretty estranged from my mom. Or well, my mom was pretty estranged for her family."

Wilbur hadn't known that.

"If I had known- " Phil says, "if I had known- "

"Would you have taken me in if you had known?"

Phil says nothing.

Wilbur knows that means 'no.' Wilbur wouldn't have blamed him. Hell, if Wilbur knew, he doesn't think he could have stayed here. Not at the beginning, not where he was.

But now...

"This changes a lot," Wilbur admits, "but uh- not between us, y'know?"

Phil blinks and tilts his head.

"I can't let this change us," Wilbur says, "because I just found some really shocking news about my parents' deaths and I really need my dad to be there for me. And I think- well I think maybe my dad found out some pretty shocking news and he needs his kid to remind him that there are still good things in this world. Y'know?"

"Yeah," Phil says hoarsely.

"Okay," Wilbur says, "okay."

"Y'know we're going back to family therapy, right?"

"Oh for sure," Wilbur agrees. Like that was even a question. Of course they're going back to family therapy.

And that- that's the talk that breaks the ice

It's weird for a long time, and Wilbur thinks that something's probably permanently changed in the relationship he has with Phil. But it doesn't change the fact that Phil's his dad, his dad that had nothing to do with his parents' deaths and didn't know anything about it.

It still hurts though. God does it hurt.

He talks to Techno about it a bit. It's hard to talk to Tommy about these things because in Wilbur's mind, the kid's still his little brother.

Techno's a bit easier, because while he's technically younger, he's been Phil's kid the longest, and that has weight to it. Techno's always seemed like the oldest. It makes it easier to confide in him.

But because Techno technically is still younger, that also means he gets to be a brat about.

For the most part he's not, listening carefully to everything Wilbur has to say.

But one comment sticks out to him.

"Y'know," Techno points out, "it's totally fair for you not to want Phil to apologize. You're right, it's not his to apologize for. But have you ever thought it's probably, I dunno, reflex for him? The little bits we do know about his parents- they weren't great people- I can imagine Phil's used to apologizing to them, and for them. Y'know? Even when it wasn't his fault," Techno justifies.

He pauses for a moment, hands wringing together, a sure sign he's thinking of his next words.

"Shut up," he mumbles, and Wilbur knows it's not directed at him.

Techno looks back up.

"I- I'm- I know I felt that way a lot about my parents. Because they- they were good parents. But they really weren't the best of people. I felt like- I still feel like- I have to, I dunno, make

up for, apologize for what they did?"

Techno shuffles, shifting on his feet. In that moment Wilbur understands a little bit better.

Yeah so Techno's a brat for breaking down Phil's childhood trauma in a fair and logical sense. That doesn't mean Wilbur has to like it.

Wilbur brings it up. Phil looks at him, so much smaller than he usually is.

"Guess I never thought about it that way," he mutters. And fuck, because that isn't a denial.

It's easier to remember Phil's grieving too after that. Wilbur's never had bad parents but everything Phil has told him about his parents reminds Wilbur exactly of the doctors and professionals who turned him away time and time again in his teen years.

That almost killed him. He can only imagine what it did to Phil.

Fundy's their touchstone through all of this and Wilbur does his best to make him not be that. He doesn't want Phil and him to be solving their issues around and through Fundy. Fundy, for all his wisdom, is a kid, and doesn't need to be dragged into this shit. That's not fair to him, and that's not being a good parent.

Something in Wilbur screams a desperate need to be the best parent he can be. Like his parents, like his aunt and uncle, and like Phil.

And not like Phil's parents.

It starts with parent teacher conferences because apparently those are things that you go to.

"I went to Techno's when he was younger," Phil remembers, "the rest of you were too old, only IEP meetings after that. And whenever you got called to the office."

"That was one time," Wilbur protests.

Phil gives him a look.

"Okay maybe a few times. Those first few years were hard."

Phil gives a nod, because yeah, those years were hard. Wilbur had been hurting and lost at the same time Techno's hallucinations were getting bad and well- Wilbur's glad it's in the past.

"How do parent teacher conferences even work," Wilbur groans.

"What are you even talking about," Phil says, "you've been to Fundy's before"

"Well yeah," Wilbur says, "but not called in to one, just the normal updates that are like twice a year."

Phil hums.

"But his teacher called me to set up a meeting," Wilbur stresses, "that has to mean something's wrong, right?"

"I mean- I wouldn't say it's something bad," Phil remarks.

"Well it's not nothing!"

Wilbur may be getting a little bit too worked up about a simple meeting.

"It might not be nothing," Phil agrees, "but that doesn't mean it's bad. Just something significant. And Fundy's a really good kid. If something is wrong, it can be helped, okay? This is okay, this is a normal thing."

Wilbur catches his breath and deepens it, breathing open and even. He sends a vicious fuck you to his anxious thought.

"Yeah," Wilbur says, "it's probably fine. It's fine."

The good news is that Wilbur seems to be way more worried about this meeting than Fundy is.

In fact- in fact Fundy skips back into his classroom after school hours, hand and hand with his father and looking positively giddy.

"Do you know what this is about?" Wilbur asks. And really- why hadn't he thought to ask that any earlier? He assumed Fundy would tell him, and Fundy had said nothing about it.

But he looks so cheerful, so obviously prepared, that Wilbur is now wondering if he does actually know what this meeting is about.

Fundy shrugs next his side.

"I think so," he whispers back, and they settle at the desk in front of Fundy's teacher.

"We're just waiting for Ms. Brilk," she says, "and then we can begin."

"Ms. Brilk?" Wilbur asks, because he's never heard that name before. Fundy's teacher nods.

"I'll explain everything soon," she says calmly. But her voice does nothing to soothe Wilbur, who sits tense in his seat, a ball of anxiousness swirling in his stomach. Fundy kicks his feet under his chair to the side, humming all the while.

Well at least Fundy's not stressed. That's good, right?

Ms. Brilk appears not too much later and with a shuffle of papers on a desk, the two get started.

"We've noticed some concerns," Fundy's teacher begins, "with some of Fundy's behaviors."

Behaviors? What has Fundy been getting up to that would make them this worried? Because they don't seem upset, truly, so it couldn't have been something bad.

Then what did Fundy do?

"Mr. Soot, I know this may be hard to hear- but- well that's why I called Ms. Brilk in. See- well she can probably explain some things better than I have."

"Mr. Soot," Ms. Brilk continues, "well Fundy's a lovely kid, but like we said we have some concerns and- well he certainly is special, and that's my expertise! See- I help some of those kids and well- Mr. Soot has Fundy ever been evaluated or tested for autism?"

"Yes!" Fundy says, jumping up with a shout, "I knew it, I totally guessed it! I'm so smart!"

Well at least Fundy's got confidence, right?

"No," Wilbur admits, "no, he hasn't-"

"Oh well, I want to assure you that children with autism-"

"Does this mean we can finally get him tested, we can get a referral, oh good finally," Wilbur groans, "It's been how many years now?"

The two teachers blink at the pair of them, Fundy doing a little victory dance on his seat and Wilbur sighing with relief.

So yeah, parent teacher conferences aren't all bad he guesses.

Fundy finally gets tested, but the results, well the results are a bit strange.

He is autistic, no doubt, no question, no surprise.

But he's also ADHD. Oh, well, yeah that makes sense, Wilbur guesses.

And...

And dyslexic?

That's the shocker. That's the big surprise.

Wilbur and Fundy have a transparent talk about it all, about the entire diagnosis and how it plays out. Fundy knows about ADHD and autism, but less about dyslexia and they discuss what that means.

"You mean words aren't supposed to swim around on the page like fishies?" he asks.

"No," Wilbur says, "no they're not."

He feels a little bad about not noticing sooner but Fundy is still so young and really, what more could Wilbur do?

But they know now, and they can work with it. Fundy can get any support he needs. Wilbur will make sure of it.

School stays a hot topic in the house for a good while. And as Fundy gets older, school gets harder and harder. But not in academics, and more in behavior.

"I got an interesting call from your teacher today," Wilbur says the moment Fundy steps through the front door.

Fundy pauses in his attempt to close the door.

"Uhhhhh, is this about the permanent markers?"

"The permanent mar- no what I'm talking about is- wait what permanent markers?"

Fundy freezes.

"Uh none. No permanent markers."

Wilbur raises an eyebrow, and that's all it takes for his son to confess.

"Look it's not even bad!" he protests, "Look!"

Fundy pushes up his sleeves, revealing sharpie all over them in swirling nonsensical patterns.

"I made tattoos! Like Uncle Ranboo's! See I got the infinity symbol like them for my autism."

And that he does, a small little infinity symbol tucked in near his wrist. Wilbur smiles at it.

"But then the other kids wanted some and so I did it on them and Ms. Peder found out and she told me I couldn't do it and it was really bad and she'd have to call my dad."

"Well she didn't call me."

Not yet, Wilbur doesn't add. Fundy's teacher calls him enough as is.

"I don't even get why it's bad anyways," Fundy complains, 'is not like I did it without making sure the other kids said it was okay. Cause consent is important."

"Well yes," Wilbur said, "And it's really good that you made sure they were okay with it. But their parents might not be super happy about it."

Fundy frowns, and shuffles his feet on the floor.

"So? Doesn't matter what their parents think. Cause it's their bodies, so they get to have uh-autonomy and make their own choices."

"Autonomy," Wilbur corrects lightly, and then realizes what his son said. Because fuck, well he has a point.

“That’s true,” Wilbur says, “But you also have to remember that your little kiddo brains are still developing so it’s important that parent’s help you make decisions as you grow up.”

Fundy thinks about the comment for a minute with pursed lips. It’s so reminiscent of Phil that Wilbur could almost believe they’re related.

“Okay,” he agrees, “That’s fair. Uh, well then is it okay if I draw with sharpie on my skin?”

Fair question.

“Maybe not sharpie,” Wilbur says, “They probably have chemicals in them that aren’t great for your skin. But we can probably find something that’s better. Sound good?”

Fundy swiftly nods.

“It’s a compromise,” he agrees, firmly, and reaches out to shake Wil’s hand. Wilbur snorts, but accepts the much smaller hand, giving it a small shake. Fundy giggles at the action, shaking his head swiftly and giving his free hand a few good flaps.

“Okay, I’m gonna go to my room now,” Fundy says, and breaks away.

“Kay munchkin,” Wilbur calls after him, watching him go.

It’s not until Fundy’s in his room with the door closed behind him that Wilbur realizes that they never actually addressed the phone call that he had received home.

“Fundy,” Wilbur calls out, “Can you come back here for a moment?”

Seconds later Wilbur’s greeted with a head poking out of the door, ginger hair askew.

“Uh,” Fundy says, “This about the phone call?”

“Yes,” Wilbur says.

“You know, I think Papa’s calling you. And he could need your help with something. He’s old, you know, he could fall and break his back.”

“Papa’s at work.”

“He is?”

“Mhmm, now about that phone call.”

Fundy sighs and trudges out of his room, rejoining Wilbur in the living room. Wilbur takes a seat on the couch and Fundy flops down next to him, fox ears tilting off his head. He doesn’t bother fixing them, instead letting his face smoosh into the couch.

“Whatcha feeling right now?” Wilbur asks, feeling the obvious mood shift.

Fundy shrugs, and doesn’t move.

“Want me to go get Foxy for you?” Wilbur asks, “Would this be better with a comfort item?”

Fundy nods into the couch.

“Okay I’ll be right back,” Wilbur says.

He gets to his feet and dips down the hall to Fundy’s room. He finds Foxy on Fundy’s bed- no surprise there- and picks him up carefully before bringing him back out and returning to the couch.

He sets the stuffed animal gently on Fundy’s back, wiggling it around and soon enough Fundy lets out a soft giggle. He turns over, carefully clutching the creature and begins to worry one of it’s ears between his fingers.

“I’m not mad,” Wilbur promises, “I just want to understand. Your teacher said you were being difficult and making up stuff in class today.”

In seconds, Fundy’s entire demeanor changes. He goes from curled up, clutching a comfort object dearly as he avoids looking at Wilbur to suddenly sitting up ramrod straight with clenched fists and bouncing feet.

“That’s not what happened,” he protests.

Wilbur realizes there’s obviously been a miscommunication. This is unfortunately common with Fundy and his teacher.

“Okay,” he agrees easily, “Why don’t you tell me what happened.”

“We had to make turkeys,” Fundy spits out, “Like thankful turkeys. For Thanksgiving. I didn’t wanna make one ‘cause I don’t wanna celebrate white people hurting in-din-guh-nus people and stuff. But my teacher said I had to make one.”

Fundy goes back to worry his fox.

“An she said I’d get in trouble if I didn’t and that I wasn’t being good and I was tryin’ to be good so I made one anyways. So I thought about what I was thankful for and I said you and my teacher asked if there was anything pacific-”

“Specific,” Wilbur corrects gently.

“Yeah that. An’ I said yeah and so I wrote I was thankful for you letting me live in your belly for nine months and then giving birth to me-”

Oh yeah that would be a problem.

“And she said that wasn’t funny and I said that I wasn’t joking,” Fundy pauses to look at Wilbur, making intense eye contact with him, “Cause I am thankful. Like a lot. Because I know it was hard for you and you say I’m worth it which is true but it’s still hard, yeah? And I told her that and she said daddies couldn’t have babies and I said my dad did. She said only

mommies could have babies and so I then said that was transphobic. She got red in the face and walked away and said she'd call you."

Fundy looks back up at him, investigating his face.

"Sorry," he says meekly.

Wilbur stares at his child, blinking and trying to comprehend the entire story that his tiny little kid has just laid out for him.

"Hey Fundy," Wilbur says, "You know how sometimes you get really excited when we plan something for a weekend? Like when we plan to go to the museum?"

Fundy nods.

"Yeah, you know that excited feeling when you're looking forward to the future?"

"Yup!" Fundy says, bouncing his feet again and gently knocking his wrists together. I get all stimmy and warm and my heart goes thump thump."

"Yeah, that," Wilbur agrees, "Well you gave me that feeling right now. That feeling of being excited for what's to come."

"Really?" Fundy says, with wide eyes.

"Yeah," Wilbur says, "Really."

"Oh," Fundy says, and then makes a deep humming noise, "I like that I make you feel that way."

"Me too, kiddo," Wilbur says, "me too."

Fundy's first true special interest is foxes. Wilbur blames Ranboo for that.

It was Ranboo who got Fundy that fox plush that started the whole thing off anyways, way back when.

"Imma call him foxy!" Fundy said with wide eyes, hugging the soft stuffed animal close to his chest. It's a mix of beans and fluff, the perfect texture for a good cuddle. Its fur is soft, not but not too long and it's a bright russet ginger just like Fundy's own hair.

"That's a good name," Ranboo encourages, "I really like it."

"Mhmm," Fundy agrees, "do you gots any stuffed animals?"

Ranboo- all six feet and six inches of him seem to shrink down to the size of his son. He crouches in, folding onto himself until he's a tiny shell of his full height.

"Yeah, I do," he admits softly, lightly- maybe even shyly? "Wanna see the ones I got with me?"

Fundy nods swiftly.

"Ye! We can play together."

Ranboo ducks his head and blushes.

"I'd like that," he admits, "it's be fun to play." Ranboo looks back over to Wilbur. "If it's okay with your dad?"

It's a question, a question for him. Ranboo's eyes are wide and hopefully and really, what does Ranboo think Wilbur's going to say, 'no'?

Except well, Ranboo is shy right now, still a bit embarrassed about his growing stuffed animal collection, so Wilbur's more than willing to be gentle.

"Course," Wilbur says, "you kiddos have fun."

Ranboo shoots him a grin, and the two of them scamper off.

And with the addition of Foxy comes a new obsession. Foxes quickly take over Fundy's entire life from his thoughts, his new facts, a book, documentaries, toys, bedspread, art, and so much more.

Fundy begs for fox plates when they go to the store and Wilbur is all for supporting his son's passion, nodding as he sets them in the cart.

Fundy squeaks and shrieks, head shaking swiftly and bouncing as he steps.

Wilbur smiles as he watches his son stim contently.

It only starts to become an issue with a specific fox related gift Fundy received a few years back- a set of fox ears, once again from Ranboo.

They're incredibly simple, just a headband with fabric ears, nothing special.

But Fundy loves them, absolutely adores them, and refuses to take them off.

Which is fine- totally fine. Fundy's attachment to foxes has been a good thing. But well, when you have a neurodivergent kid there's so many places people aren't going to support that.

Adults mostly judge Wilbur about it, not Fundy. Wilbur gets looks for letting his son wear fox ears in public as he lets out little barks and explains what they mean to foxes. Adults never say anything to Fundy directly.

Honestly, that works with Wilbur. Wilbur's good with getting odd side glances of poorly hidden disgust if it means his kid gets to be himself.

The problem is the kids don't hide their feelings quite as well as the adults.

The fox ears were cool for the first few years. Other kids liked them, enjoyed the idea of dress up games and cute animals.

But pushing nine, wearing fox ears everywhere was not cool. In fact- to nine year old boys it was very uncool.

Which is the reason why Fundy comes home crying from his first sleepover.

Wilbur picks him up a bit on the earlier side. It's Fundy's first sleepover and the kid had been so excited but Wilbur also knows that change can be a hard adjustment and that he's never woken up in an unfamiliar place without his family before.

Plus if Wilbur shows up a bit early and Fundy's still having a good time, he can always come back later.

Right?

He's not making this too big of a deal, right?

Phil chuckles.

"You're fine," he encourages, "go pick the kid up."

So with a nod and a bit more confidence, Wilbur does so.

Fundy's friend's mom lets him in. Wilbur knows her well enough, he wouldn't be comfortable letting Fundy stay the night if he hadn't.

That said, Wilbur doesn't know her all too well. He'd love to get to know Fundy's friends' parents more, but well, that means Fundy would have to actually have friends.

Wilbur winces at how harsh that sounds in his head, because it's not for lack of trying on Fundy's part. He's a kind, sweet kid, but he's so obviously neurodivergent and the other kids tend to try and avoid that.

Fundy's great at making acquaintances, short term friends, or a buddy at the park.

But Wilbur's never known Fundy to be good friends with anyone longer than a few months.

Which is one of the reasons this sleepover is such a big deal to him.

"I'll go check on them, let Fundy know you're here," the mom- Elenaor- says, "the boys are all upstates in Nelson's room. You can sit if you'd like."

Wilbur nods and stands awkwardly in her kitchen.

Would it be weird or presumptuous for him to sit down at the counter? Certainly not, right? And the counter's a lot less awkward than sitting at the table, yeah?

Or wait, would the table be better, is that more professional and adult like? Wilbur had been going for casual but maybe as a fellow parent sitting at the table looks more responsible?

He doesn't have a chance to take a seat- mind spinning anxious circles about seating that really is unimportant- before Eleanor returns. Eleanor comes back with Fundy walking behind her, and a few other boys trailing behind them.

They're loud, jostling each other and laughing. Two are holding nerf guns.

Fundy doesn't participate in the games, instead he trains his eyes on Wilbur, peering up at his dad through russet hair that drapes over his eyes. A familiar fox ear headband sits on the top of his head.

"Hey kiddo, ready to go home?" Wilbur asks, a touch too cheerfully. It's a bit forced, and he's not even sure why. He just- dads just know these things don't they? And Wilbur has a sinking feeling about this sleepover.

Fundy nods, saying nothing and scoots forward.

A few minutes of pleasantries and thank yous later and they're finally out the door.

The moment the door shuts behind them, Fundy tackles his father in a hug, face burying into his side. Fundy narrowly misses the sharp edge of Wilbur's hip bone.

"Hey kiddo," Wilbur repeats.

Fundy doesn't say anything until they're almost home.

"Did ya know that male arctic foxes will let their family eat them if there isn't enough food in the winter? That way the family can live and they don't all die."

"Oh, no I didn't know that," Wilbur says, "that's pretty neat. A bit sad, but smart."

It's also one of the more morbid fox facts he's heard out of son, leaving him fairly concerned.

"Yeah," Fundy says, "the entire family goes in their cave together and they sleep together and stuff but then they get hungry so they just- they just eat someone they slept with. And that fox trusted the rest of the foxes."

Ah. So this isn't just about foxes. Wilbur suspected as much.

"It's sad that they broke that trust," Wilbur says.

Fundy goes silent.

"Well the dad fox is okay with it."

Back to foxes now. Does Wilbur push it back to sleepover, or let the fact be?

"Did something happen in the cave?" Wilbur asks, deciding to gently probe. If Fundy wants him to leave him alone, he can bring it back to foxes from there.

Fundys quiet for a few more minutes. They're pulling into the driveway when he gets out a near silent, "yes."

Wilbur turns off the car engine, but makes no move to get out. Instead he turns gently to face Fundy. Fundy isn't looking at him at all, instead picking and pulling at his fingers.

"Um," Fundy stumbles, "am I a baby?"

"What do you mean?" Wilbur returns.

Fundy shrugs.

"Cause you know- I wear my fox ears and I still carry 'round a stuffed animal and stuff."

"Did the kids at the sleepover call you a baby?" Wilbur asks, because he's not quite sure how to answer Fundy's question.

"They're my friends," Fundy defends, and that's a non answer if Wilbur's ever seen one.

"Friends don't hurt other friends on purpose," Wilbur points out.

Fundy pulls at his fingers more, completely silent as he shrugs in response.

He stays silent for a few minutes, the two of them sitting in the car. It's lasting long enough that Wilbur's thinking they should probably get up and move inside.

Then- instantly- Fundy bursts out in tears.

"Oh, oh honey," Wilbur soothes, more than a bit taken aback.

That only makes Fundy cry harder.

"I, I don't want to be the weird kid," he cries, "I don't want to be the baby! I don't want to be different I just want to be like everyone else?"

And Wilbur's heart shatters for the fourth times in his life.

It feels like losing someone he loves all over again, he feels like he's losing Fundy. Like Fundy's given up. And Wilbur hates that his kid feels that way.

"Fundy," Wilbur says, "Fundy."

His voice has this desperate edge to it, desperate to convince this tiny child that he has worth and that he has value.

But part of Wilbur knows he can't.

Because fuck, all Wilbur can do is tell his kid how much he's worth and that he's this incredible being. And god knows Wilbur has done that.

And sure Fundy can work on his self worth and be able to recognize that he is this fantastic individual.

But even so, Fundy will still always be the weird kid.

That's what being neurodivergent is, unfortunately. It's being the weird kid and not fitting in and being treated just slightly off because you don't fit in.

It's not always bullying, but sometimes it's small tricks, jokes you don't fit into, or someone being overly nice thinking they're doing you a favor.

And Fundy will always be that kid.

And Wilbur can't fix that

Wilbur can't fix Fundy's hurt.

He sobs in Phil's arms that night.

"How did you- how did you do it?" he asks.

"Do what?" his father returns.

"Watch us struggle with things out of our control," Wilbur desperately explains, searching for an answer he's not sure he'll find.

Phil shrugs.

"I did my best," he admits, "that's all I can do."

Goddammit that's not the answer he wants. At the same time, he knows it's the only one he'll get.

"Fuck," he whines, "fuck."

"Wilbur?"

"I forgive them," he blurts out, desperate, because Phil has to know.

"Wil?"

"I forgive your parents," Wilbur pushes forward. "I do," he howls, "fuck Phil, I forgive them."

Phil blinks at him, unmoving, frozen at Wilbur's shattered confession.

"I forgive them," Wilbur confesses, "for killing my parents. Because alcoholism is a disease and it takes and it takes and it took from you and it took my parents and it took from me but the people it took the most from were your parents. And, and yes they made their choices and

that's their responsibility but they were also sick, god they were sick, and they didn't get the help they needed, the help they deserved, and that is not their fault and-

Wilbur breathes heavily, trying to catch the words that are tumbling out of his mouth, hoping that he can organize them in some sort of fashion that will make even a remote amount of sense.

"I forgive them," Wilbur breathes, "I do."

Wilbur's not the only one with misty eyes at the confession.

There Phil and Wilbur stand, both victims of alcoholism. But they're not the only victims. Wilbur's parents, Fundy, Aunt Margaret- god even Techno and Tommy to an extent- are victims of this disease.

But so were Phil's parents.

Wilbur's finally able to recognize that.

Phil and Wilbur smash into the hug, body's colliding in a desperate, painful way. They hold each other close in the way only a parent and a child can.

For the first time in years, Wilbur doesn't struggle with his next inhale and Phil breathes without a hitch.

And something within them both heals.

That same week, Wilbur approaches Phil, asking if he still has that voicemail from Sally when Fundy was a baby.

Phil gives him this sad, all knowing looking with his dumb big eyes and nods.

Wilbur sighs, and gives a nod back.

It's time.

"Hey," Sally says and Wilbur instantly winces. Her voice is preserved, still so young, just barely older than a teenager. They really had been that young, huh?

"It's uh Sally," she carries on. There's shuffling in the background, "this is Phil. Um, Wilbur's dad. I-" she trails off, heaving a deep, heavy sigh. "This, this is a message for Wilbur. I want him to hear this. I uh- I get if he doesn't want to hear it. But I'd appreciate if you'd at least tell him. So, yeah, assuming this is Wil- hi."

It's been years. Why does it hurt this much?

"Hi," Wilbur whispers back semiconsciously, knowing that she can't hear.

Sally breathes again.

"So uh, you had our kid. Um, assuming, assuming you did. You probably didn't. It- I looked into it a bit. The odds- did you know up to a third of people have miscarriages and that's not even considering the complications of your adrenal condition and- " she sighs again, then chuckles lightly, "Yeah. Yeah of course you know. So it probably didn't happen- plus how young you were, plus the fact that I- that I left. Well we probably don't have a kid. And, and I just want you to know that isn't your fault.

"Wilbur, you didn't do anything wrong."

It feels like Sally's reaching into his chest and gripping down hard on his heart. Wilbur clenches his eyes shut and his fists tight from the pain.

"This isn't your fault," she says, "not having our kid, or, or losing them. That's not your fault. And me leaving? That definitely wasn't your fault.

"If we did have the kid, and Wilbur, if you, if you have a baby now then- fuck I don't know what I'm supposed to say. Just know, well, I'm- I'll help support that. I know that this kid came from me and I- I take responsibility for that. Child support, I can do that.

"But I'm not going to be this kid's mother. And I'm not coming back. And I can't do this thing with you anymore and-

"I'm sorry. It's not fair to you, it's not. And you deserve an explanation but honestly, all I really can say is that this wasn't something I could do, can do. This- I can't do this Wilbur. And I have to- I can't force myself to do this. I need to do this for myself. So, I'm not coming back. I'm sorry. You deserve better. You deserve better, but I can't give you that."

And then it ends. The crackling and breathing on the other line fades and Wilbur's left with the harsh silence of an ended voicemail.

Well uh, that's one hell of a message, isn't that?

Wilbur doesn't cry. He would have thought that he would, but he doesn't.

"I'm uh, I'm going to go check on Fundy," Wilbur says, "make sure he's sleeping."

Phil nods.

Wilbur makes his way to Fundy's room, silently slipping in.

His son is half on his stomach and half on his side, fast asleep under his fox themed comforter and fox plush he holds close.

Wilbur smiles down at him and makes his way over. He brushes a little bit of hair out of Fundy's eyes and crouches down.

"I love you," he whispers, settling a gentle kiss on his son's forehead.

Even in his sleep, Fundy smiles.

Maybe, maybe that's enough. This life, this miracle before him, that can be enough for Wilbur.

It's worth it, he internally promises his younger self. Living is worth it.

It truly, truly is.

Chapter End Notes

Well. There we go. That's a wrap on Wilbur's fic. I'm- fuck I'm kind of relieved? Like in the way- I wanted to get this all to you because I wanted all of you to know that this family was going to be okay. They are going to be okay. And you can, and will be okay today.

HUGE SHOUTOUT to the writers block discord server (especially wgi). I didn't join the secret Santa event because I knew I would have time with work and finals as well as my own personal holiday struggles. This final chapter is my gift to y'all for holidays.

And now, as always, let's talk about the next fic

RANBOO FIC

- title: a field of alliums to lay in
- its going to be fairly intensely trauma focused
- that said, as always it will have warnings
- and a happy ending
- we're going to learn A Lot more about ranboo and his history
- its takes place when bench trio is out of high school!
- mote Niki!
- most importantly, it's a long one
- it compass and locket are the original and sequel, allium will be the conclusion of the trilogy

WHATS HAPPENING WITH ENCOMPASS:

as I said above, and as I think some of you may be wondering, allium is indeed the conclusion of the encompass series.

...sort of.

There will be one final encompass story to round off the series after allium but I'll be the shortest by far and is meant to tie everything off well and give this series a proper send off.

And with that announcement comes another.

WHAT NEXT?

encompass the series is ending but with its end I announce two (maybe three) new exciting things.

1. encompass: behind the scenes

- this series will be behind the scenes look at encompass
- The first fic will be a space for q&a for me. It will go up the same day as ranboos first chapter.
- u can ask me any questions you have about me or the series that you would like more of a response on.
- there will also be potential other behind the scene shit like things that didn't make it in, my planning process, and my personal favorite scenes

2. encompass: the extras

The truth is, just like many of you, I'm not ready to give up encompass. That said, I refuse to drag this series out because I can't let it go. Its story is almost fully told and I don't want to disrespect that. So encompass extras is where I can let the brainrot out

- more coming soon at the end of ranboos story and the final encompass story
- basically shorter fics at any time period showing aspects of the world I wasn't able to fit in the main story line
- maybe even some au stuff idk it'll just be fun

3. I'd like to potentially start a third series called encompass: the sandbox.

- the idea is that anyone can write about encompass, inspired by encompass, for encompass and it would go here.
- none would be considered Canon
- would give y'all the chance to dip your toes in the shared encompass pool

For this to happen, I need to know if there's interest. So let me know what y'all think.

Okay, lightning out.

~Cool Community Things to Check Out!~

Encompass Sandbox Project: The official guide to the Encompass Sandbox Project- a project in which users are encouraged to take inspiration from the encompass series and create their own varying works of fiction from writing, to art, and so much more.

encompass: the sandbox: encompass: the sandbox is the official collection for the Encompass Sandbox Project.

encompass: behind the scenes: an insider look at everything that goes on in the encompass series. This series will feature Q&A, projects, plans, and other behind the scenes content.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!